

# The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

## August 22, 2021

**Baptized into Your Name Most Holy** Lutheran Service Book 590, Lutheran Worship 224, The Lutheran Hymnal 298



1 Bap-tized in - to Your name most ho - ly, O Fa - ther, Son, and  
2 My lov - ing Fa - ther, here You take me To be hence-forth Your  
3 My faith - ful God, You fail me nev - er; Your prom - ise sure - ly  
4 All that I am and love most dear-ly— Re - ceive it all, O



Ho - ly Ghost, I claim a place, though weak and low - ly,  
child and heir. My faith - ful Sav - ior, here You make me  
will en - dure. O cast me not a - way for - ev - er  
Lord, from me. Let me con - fess my faith sin - cere - ly;



A - mong Your saints, Your cho - sen host. Bur - ied with Christ and  
The fruit of all Your sor - rows share. O Ho - ly Spir - it,  
If words and deeds be - come im - pure. Have mer - cy when I  
Help me Your faith - ful child to be! Let noth - ing that I



dead to sin, Your Spir - it now shall live with - in.  
com - fort me When threat - 'ning clouds a - round I see.  
come de - filed; For - give, lift up, re - store Your child.  
am or own Serve an - y will but Yours a - lone.

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**L** In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**L** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C** who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

**L** Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

**C** Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

**L** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?  
**C** But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

**L** Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

**C** God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

(*Luke 18:13*)

**L** Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

### Introit Psalm 26:1–2, 6–7; antiphon Psalm 26:8

**L** O Lord, I love the habitation of your house  
and the place where your glory dwells.

**C** Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity,  
and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.

**L** Prove me, O Lord, and try me;  
test my heart and my mind.

**C** I wash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord,  
proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all your wondrous deeds.

**C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

**L** O Lord, I love the habitation of your house  
and the place where your glory dwells.

### Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

### Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

**L** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

**C** Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.

**L** Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:

**C** Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

**L** Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.

**C** For You alone are the Holy One,  
You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

## Collect of the Day

**L** Let us pray: Almighty and merciful God, defend Your Church from all false teaching and error that Your faithful people may confess You to be the only true God and rejoice in Your good gifts of life and salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## Isaiah 29:11–19

<sup>11</sup>And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” <sup>12</sup>And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot read.”

<sup>13</sup>And the Lord said:

“Because this people draw near with their mouth  
and honor me with their lips,  
while their hearts are far from me,  
and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,

<sup>14</sup>therefore, behold, I will again  
do wonderful things with this people,  
with wonder upon wonder;  
and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,  
and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden.”

<sup>15</sup>Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel,  
whose deeds are in the dark,  
and who say, “Who sees us? Who knows us?”

<sup>16</sup>You turn things upside down!  
Shall the potter be regarded as the clay,  
that the thing made should say of its maker,  
“He did not make me”;  
or the thing formed say of him who formed it,  
“He has no understanding”?

<sup>17</sup>Is it not yet a very little while  
until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,  
and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest?

<sup>18</sup>In that day the deaf shall hear  
the words of a book,  
and out of their gloom and darkness  
the eyes of the blind shall see.

<sup>19</sup>The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD,  
and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Gradual Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

**L** Fear the Lord, you his saints,

**C** for those who fear him lack nothing!

- L** Many are the afflictions of the righteous,  
**C** but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

## Psalm 14

- L** <sup>1</sup>The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."  
They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.  
**C** <sup>2</sup>**The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man,  
to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.**  
**L** <sup>3</sup>They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt;  
there is none who does good, not even one.  
**C** <sup>4</sup>**Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers  
who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the LORD?**  
**L** <sup>5</sup>There they are in great terror, for God is with the generation of the righteous.  
**C** <sup>6</sup>**You would shame the plans of the poor, but the LORD is his refuge.**  
**L** <sup>7</sup>Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!  
**C** **When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.**

## Ephesians 5:22–33

<sup>22</sup>Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup>Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup>that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup>In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup>because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup>"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup>This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup>However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.  
**C** Thanks be to God.

## Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 15:16a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Your words were found, and I ate them, Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. And your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart. Alleluia.

## Mark 7:1–13

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter.  
**C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>When the Pharisees gathered to [Jesus], with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. <sup>3</sup>(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, <sup>4</sup>and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) <sup>5</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" <sup>6</sup>And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

“This people honors me with their lips,  
but their heart is far from me;  
<sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me,  
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

<sup>8</sup>You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

<sup>9</sup>And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! <sup>10</sup>For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ <sup>11</sup>But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban’ (that is, given to God)— <sup>12</sup>then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, <sup>13</sup>thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

**L** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.

and sits at the right hand of God the Father  
Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**The Church's One Foundation** Lutheran Service Book 644, Lutheran Worship 289, The Lutheran Hymnal 473



1 The Church's one foun - da - tion Is Je - sus Christ, her Lord;  
2 E - lect from ev - 'ry na - tion, Yet one o'er all the earth;  
3 Though with a scorn - ful won - der The world sees her op - pressed,  
4 Through toil and trib - u - la - tion And tu - mult of her war



She is His new cre - a - tion By wa - ter and the Word.  
Her char - ter of sal - va - tion: One Lord, one faith, one birth.  
By schisms rent a - sun - der, By her - e - sies dis - tressed,  
She waits the con - sum - ma - tion Of peace for - ev - er - more



From heav'n He came and sought her To be His ho - ly bride;  
One ho - ly name she bless - es, Par - takes one ho - ly food,  
Yet saints their watch are keep - ing; Their cry goes up, "How long?"  
Till with the vi - sion glo - rious Her long - ing eyes are blest,



With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died.  
And to one hope she press - es With ev - 'ry grace en - dued.  
And soon the night of weep - ing Shall be the morn of song.  
And the great Church vic - to - rious Shall be the Church at rest.

- 5 Yet she on earth has union  
With God, the Three in One,  
And mystic sweet communion  
With those whose rest is won.  
O blessed heav'nly chorus!  
Lord, save us by Your grace  
That we, like saints before us,  
May see You face to face.

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## Devotional Thoughts:

A golden turkey roasted to perfection, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, sweet corn, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie with whipped cream make the perfect Thanksgiving dinner for me. Then in the afternoon, I enjoy a football game and wrap up the evening with a turkey sandwich!

Soon we are decorating our tree with lights and ornaments of every shape and color. We wrap gifts and bake cookies. Christmas carols are in the air. Before long, we are holding candles and singing Silent Night in church. We open our presents on Christmas Eve. On Christmas Day, a perfectly baked ham appears on our table and then we are off to spend the day with family.

Our world is saturated with tradition. We stand for the National Anthem. We put our hands on our hearts when we say the Pledge of Allegiance. We watch fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation on Memorial Day. We remember those who have faithfully served our country on Veterans Day.

These are all worthy customs. They are deeply ingrained in our consciousness as Americans. That is why so many are troubled when our nation, flag, and anthem are dishonored even if the cause for protest is worthy.

But our Gospel lesson gives us the opportunity to step back and gain some perspective on these and other traditions in our lives. No matter how commendable and beneficial they may be, none of these traditions are commanded by God! We must never confuse human tradition with God's commands.

No one would be so foolish as to believe that the Bible teaches us to eat turkey on Thanksgiving. But the Bible does teach us to give thanks! No specific day or method for thanksgiving is specified but giving thanks is a recurring theme in Scripture.

Likewise, sprinkling, pouring, or immersion is not commanded in Baptism. ("And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing (baptizing) of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches"—Note: The Greek word translated as washing in Mark 4:7 is baptize. It is possible to immerse cups,

pots, and copper vessels. However, dining couches could not be immersed and were simply washed with water. The “verb baptize in Greek may denote immersion, it also describes washings by pouring or sprinkling”<sup>1</sup>.) Candles in church are neither commanded nor forbidden. The list goes on.

The Pharisees in Jesus’ day had elevated their human traditions to the level of commandments given by God. Jesus reprimanded them with this quote from Isaiah:

“This people honors me with their lips,  
but their heart is far from me;  
in vain do they worship me,  
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

Not only had they turned their traditions into commands from God, they also had abandoned God’s actual commandments.

So also today, we must heed Jesus’ warning. Most of our traditions are beneficial. They serve our families, our nation, and our church. However, in the Church, our traditions must always serve to enhance our appreciation for God’s word and pure doctrine. They must never obscure the truth of salvation by grace through faith for Christ’s sake.

I close my eyes, bow my head, and fold my hands for prayer. Does God command this posture for prayer? No. But I find that it helps me to focus on God in my prayer. I will continue to pray this way. But I will never require others to use my posture. Some will stand, sit, or kneel. Others may lay flat on the floor with their face to the ground in prayer. (I once witnessed this in Israel.)

Throughout my life, pastors in the Lutheran Church have worn vestments while conducting the worship service. Today, you may find Lutheran pastors wearing business suits, aloha shirts, or polo shirts as they lead the service. I will continue to wear a clergy collar, robes, and a stole in conducting worship but there is no command from God to do so. However, I have judged this to be a wise tradition. Others are free to disagree. The ultimate goal is that God would be glorified and the truth of His word clearly taught and proclaimed in our worship.

Heeding Jesus’ words, we are reminded to never add to the doctrines of the Bible nor are we ever to subtract from them. We may not modify the truth of God’s word for marketing purposes or our own private traditions. In addition, Luther reminds us that it is unwise to cause confusion in the Church by changing traditions that do not violate God’s command. Those traditions that do violate God’s word must be changed.

Paul shared a guiding principle for us in 1 Corinthians 2:2, “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” May all of our traditions and practices have this goal, to proclaim Christ and Him crucified. Through the art and architecture of our churches, through the liturgy and vestments, through our hymns and prayers, through standing, sitting, and kneeling may we always focus on Jesus, His cross, resurrection, and the forgiveness of sins won for us. May all we say and do bring glory to God and salvation to sinners.

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

**L** Almighty God, to whom all hearts are known, grant us a true faith, that we would honor You not only with our lips, but serve You faithfully with all of our heart, mind and strength.

**C Amen.**

**L** Gracious Lord, give joy and hope to all of us in remembrance of our Baptism, that we may rejoice in the forgiveness of sins that Christ freely pours out upon us.

**C Amen.**

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<sup>1</sup>Edward A. Engelbrecht, *The Lutheran Study Bible*, 1669 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

**L** Heavenly Father, preserve us from rejecting Your commandments for the doctrines of men. By Your Spirit's aid, lead all Christians to keep Your commandments in thought, word and deed, honoring You in all that we do.

**C** Amen.

**L** Preserve, O Lord, Your estate of marriage. Grant that wives would respect their husbands and husbands love their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her.

**C** Amen.

**L** Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. We thank You for the protection granted to all who have attended to our needs during the pandemic. As we again experience an increase in infections, we ask for Your continued protection and grace.

**C** Amen.

**C** I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

**C** Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**L** Let us bless the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**L** The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

**C** Amen.

**Alleluia! Let Praises Ring** Lutheran Service Book 822, Lutheran Worship 437, The Lutheran Hymnal 23



1	Al - le - lu - ia!	Let prais - es ring!	To God the Fa -
2	Al - le - lu - ia!	Let prais - es ring!	Un - to the Lamb
3	Al - le - lu - ia!	Let prais - es ring!	Un - to the Ho -
4	Al - le - lu - ia!	Let prais - es ring!	Un - to our tri -



ther	let us bring	Our songs	of ad - o - ra - tion.
of	God we sing,	In whom	we are e - lect - ed.
ly	Ghost we sing	For our	re - gen - er - a - tion.
une	God we sing;	Blest be	His name for - ev - er!





To Him through ev - er - last - ing days Be wor - ship, hon -  
He bought His Church with His own blood, He cleansed her in  
The sav - ing faith in us He wrought And us un - to  
With an - gel hosts let us a - dore And sing His prais -



or, pow'r, and praise, Whose hand sus - tains cre - a - tion.  
that bless - ed flood, And as His bride se - lect - ed.  
the Bride-groom brought, Made us His cho - sen na - tion.  
es ev - er - more For all His grace and fa - vor!



Sing - ing, ring - ing: Ho - ly, ho - ly, God is ho - ly;  
Ho - ly, ho - ly Is our u - nion And com - mu - nion.  
Glo - ry! Glo - ry! Joy e - ter - nal, Bliss su - per - nal;  
Sing - ing, ring - ing: Ho - ly, ho - ly, God is ho - ly;



Spread the sto - ry Of our God, the Lord of glo - ry.  
His be - friend - ing Gives us joy and peace un - end - ing.  
There is man - na And an end - less, glad ho - san - na.  
Spread the sto - ry Of our God, the Lord of glo - ry!

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### Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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# Enhancing Your Worship

## Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27  
My eyes are awake through the night watches,  
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

## The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### August 23– August 28, 2021

#### Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you mediate on what God has done for you.

#### Monday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

#### Introit Psalm 26:1–2, 6–7; antiphon Psalm 26:8

- L** O Lord, I love the habitation of your house  
and the place where your glory dwells.  
**C** Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity,  
and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.  
**L** Prove me, O Lord, and try me;  
test my heart and my mind.  
**C** I wash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord,  
proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all your wondrous deeds.  
**C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.  
**L** O Lord, I love the habitation of your house  
and the place where your glory dwells.

#### Kyrie

- |                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>L</b> O Lord,   | <b>C</b> Have Mercy on us. |
| <b>L</b> O Christ, | <b>C</b> Have Mercy on us. |
| <b>L</b> O Lord,   | <b>C</b> Have Mercy on us. |

The antiphon for our introit this week is Psalm 26:8, “O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells.” This is in sharp contrast to the beginning words of the Psalm, “Vindicate me, O Lord.”

As you read through Psalm 26, you will notice the disparity that David sees between his time spent in the world and the time spent in God’s house. In the world, David finds people of falsehood, hypocrites, evildoers, and the wicked.

He loves every opportunity to leave this all behind and simply spend time in God’s house and experience the steadfast love of God (Psalm 26:3). In God’s house, David is constantly reminded of the Lord’s faithfulness to all of His promises.

Valerie and I recently returned from our reunion with the class of 1971 of Concordia, Ann Arbor. If you have been on the campus of Concordia, you know how spectacular the Chapel of the Holy Trinity is with its magnificent stained glass windows.

We arrived at the chapel very early for the closing service. As we sat peacefully gazing at resurrected Christ depicted in the window behind the altar, I could understand in part what David expressed in this psalm. I recalled the many times I had heard the proclamation of God’s grace from the pulpit and sung the majestic hymns of the church with fellow believers in this place. For a moment, I knew what he meant when he said, “O Lord, I love the habitation of your house.” How can we not help but love the place where God comes to us in word and sacrament with the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation?

**L** Let us pray. Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells. In the multitude of Your tender mercies prepare my heart when I attend church that I may enter Your house to worship and confess Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, my God and Lord.

**C** Amen

## Tuesday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 15:16a

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Your words were found, and I ate them, Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. And your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** Let us pray: Almighty and merciful God, defend Your Church from all false teaching and error that Your faithful people may confess You to be the only true God and rejoice in Your good gifts of life and salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

Which parts of your car are you content to have fail? We recently were privileged to acquire a new vehicle. I expected that everything would be in perfect operating order when we drove off the lot. I am happy to report, that as far as I know, everything was working flawlessly.

We now have driven it many miles. I am disappointed to see it age. As Indiana Jones once quipped, “It’s not the years. It’s the mileage!”

I also recently replaced the fuel pump in a 2000 model year Mustang. It definitely has seen better days. No matter what I tried, it wouldn't run. Finally, I determined that the fuel pump was bad. I ordered a new one and after much travail, it was installed and the Mustang came back to life. The Mustang runs but I still prefer my newer vehicle where everything works!

Doctrine in the Church is much like a new automobile. It should always be unflawed. No false teaching should be permitted. Sometimes, false teaching sneaks into the church. It's never acceptable. However, some false doctrine is so serious that it destroys the church. Some doctrines are like the fuel pump in an automobile. When it goes bad, the vehicle is useless. The fuel pump, engine, transmission, wheels, etc are essential for the operation of the vehicle. Without them, what you have may look like a car but it provides no transportation.

So also in the church, when God's grace is falsified, when the cross of Jesus is nullified, when the true God is turned into a false God, what you have may look like a church but it provides no salvation.

In the collect this week, we pray that the Church does not succumb to false teaching so that salvation may come through the work and ministry of God's people.

Let us pray: Almighty and merciful God, defend Your Church from all false teaching and error that Your faithful people may confess You to be the only true God and rejoice in Your good gifts of life and salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## Wednesday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 15:16a

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Your words were found, and I ate them, Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. And your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart. Alleluia.

## Psalms 14

**L** <sup>1</sup>The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.

**C** <sup>2</sup>**The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man,  
to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.**

**L** <sup>3</sup>They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt;  
there is none who does good, not even one.

**C** <sup>4</sup>**Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers  
who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the LORD?**

**L** <sup>5</sup>There they are in great terror, for God is with the generation of the righteous.

**C** <sup>6</sup>**You would shame the plans of the poor, but the LORD is his refuge.**

**L** <sup>7</sup>Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!

**C** **When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.**

## Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

I always chuckle when I read Psalm 14:1, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.” You may think that this is odd. Let me explain.

When I served as a vicar at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Moline, Il., I helped them begin “The Radio Bible Class of the Air.” It was broadcast every week on a local radio station. A room in the education wing of the church was converted into a studio. A number of members sat around a table with Pastor Haake at the head. I positioned microphones and recorded the broadcasts from outside the room.

During one recording session, Pastor asked one of the Bible class members to read Psalm 14:1. Each time he came to the word “abominable,” he would say, “abdominal.” Everyone would laugh. I would stop the tape and we’d try again. However, each time we restarted the tape, “abominable” came out as “abdominal” and laughter would ensue.

However, atheism is no laughing matter. It is ultimate foolishness. It is foolishness that leads to eternal death.

The irony is that those who deny the existence of God believe that they are indeed the ultimately wise and those who trust and believe in God are foolish. This is an abomination.

Humanity is gifted with a natural knowledge of God. We can infer the existence of God from the wonders of creation. Psalm 19:1 tells us, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” When we look at the world around us and the incredible complexity of nature, we exclaim with the writer of Hebrews, “Every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.”

In addition, we are all born with a basic knowledge of right and wrong. This sense of equity and justice is a gift from God and informs our conscience. Our conscience is evidence of God. We read in Romans 2:15, “They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.”

An atheist must foolishly reject the evidence of nature and conscience in order to say, “There is no God.” However, simply knowing that there is a god is not enough. Every culture of the world has some concept of god or gods. People are born religious by nature. But we only know the true God through His revealed word found in the Bible. John 17:3 reminds us, “This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

Let us not be foolish but wise unto salvation! “You have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15 NIV).

Prayer: Look with mercy, O Lord, on Your servants who are brokenhearted. Where they have sinned, grant them repentance that they may receive Your forgiveness and live in the mercy of Your healing power. Bind up their broken hearts through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Thursday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 15:16a

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Your words were found, and I ate them, Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. And your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

## Isaiah 29:11–19

<sup>11</sup>And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” <sup>12</sup>And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot read.”

<sup>13</sup>And the Lord said:

“Because this people draw near with their mouth  
and honor me with their lips,  
while their hearts are far from me,  
and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,

<sup>14</sup>therefore, behold, I will again  
do wonderful things with this people,  
with wonder upon wonder;  
and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,  
and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden.”

<sup>15</sup>Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel,  
whose deeds are in the dark,  
and who say, “Who sees us? Who knows us?”

<sup>16</sup>You turn things upside down!  
Shall the potter be regarded as the clay,  
that the thing made should say of its maker,  
“He did not make me”;  
or the thing formed say of him who formed it,  
“He has no understanding”?

<sup>17</sup>Is it not yet a very little while  
until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,  
and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest?

<sup>18</sup>In that day the deaf shall hear  
the words of a book,  
and out of their gloom and darkness  
the eyes of the blind shall see.

<sup>19</sup>The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD,  
and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

In the Gospel for this week, Jesus reiterates Isaiah’s prophecy, “People draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me.” This is a disaster in the making!

Every generation must deal with this tragedy. We have often heard this concept in phrases such as, “They are all talk and no action.”

We too have been guilty when we mumble through prayers without thinking. But it’s important for us to remember that God is not fooled. He is able to look into our hearts and see precisely what we are thinking regardless of what is coming out of our mouths.

The people of ancient Israel were guilty of simply repeating ritualized prayers and hymns. May we repent of such misuse of God’s word and our time in worship.

There is a Latin expression for extemporaneous prayer. It is *ex corde* meaning “from the heart.” All of our prayer and worship should be from the heart whether we are using prepared prayers or speaking without preparation. Our words may be eloquent or halting but they must be an authentic representation of our hearts. Let us remember the words of the Apostle Paul, “Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead” (Romans 10:9).

Prayer: O God, through the grace of Your Holy Spirit You pour the gifts of love into our hearts. Grant that we may love You with our whole heart and with our whole strength perform those things that are pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Friday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

### Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 15:16a

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Your words were found, and I ate them, Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. And your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

<b>L</b> O Lord,	<b>C</b> Have Mercy on us.
<b>L</b> O Christ,	<b>C</b> Have Mercy on us.
<b>L</b> O Lord,	<b>C</b> Have Mercy on us.

### Ephesians 5:21–33

<sup>21</sup>submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

<sup>22</sup>Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup>Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup>that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup>In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup>because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup>“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup>This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

<sup>33</sup>However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

I’ve included the last verse from our Epistle lesson from last week. I was disappointed that our readings separate verses 21 and 22.

Much (too much in my opinion) is made of verse 22, “Wives, submit to your own husbands” as if this were some strange anti-woman teaching. In fact, the whole Christian life is one of submitting whether we are male or female. To quote verse 22 without verse 21 does violence to the text.

It is important here to remember Paul’s words to the Romans, “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think” (Romans 12:3). The Christian life is one of submission. Jesus, himself, “came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). In Ephesians, Paul is simply asking men and women to be Christ-like!

Husbands are called upon to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her! Jesus’ self-sacrificing love leads to the cross!

In the end, Paul knows that our every attempt to be Christ-like ultimately ends in failure. So as a practical matter he writes this, “Let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

Prayer: O Lord, You promised Your blessing upon marriage. Grant that husbands and wives may live together in love and peace and serve You in gratitude and joy. Give them day by day the strength to bear each other's burden that they may grow together in every need and joy and become a blessing one to the other. Be a strong helper in every marriage; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Saturday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

### Gradual Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

**L** Fear the Lord, you his saints,  
**C** **for those who fear him lack nothing!**  
**L** Many are the afflictions of the righteous,  
**C** **but the Lord delivers him out of them all.**

### Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 15:16a

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Your words were found, and I ate them, Alleluia.  
**C** **Alleluia, Alleluia. And your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart. Alleluia.**

## Kyrie

<b>L</b> O Lord,	<b>C</b> <b>Have Mercy on us.</b>
<b>L</b> O Christ,	<b>C</b> <b>Have Mercy on us.</b>
<b>L</b> O Lord,	<b>C</b> <b>Have Mercy on us.</b>

### Ephesians 5:25-27

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup>that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

The relationship between Jesus and the Church can be characterized as a marriage. The Church is often called the Bride of Christ. Ultimate marital love is one of self-sacrifice rather than the contemporary view of self-fulfillment!

But I want to point out the baptismal reference in the text. Jesus died on the cross for this purpose: that He might sanctify the Church! He does this by cleansing her "by the washing of water with the word." There is no better definition of Baptism than this! The power of Baptism is nothing other than the word of God!

He does this that He might present the Church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

One of the most pleasant memories of my life is standing at the altar and turning to see for the first time my bride in her wedding gown about to come down the aisle on our wedding day. It is an incomparable sight shared by grooms. It is an earthly representation of how Jesus views the Church. The beautiful gown without spot or wrinkle represents the righteousness that covers us in our Baptism!

Prayer: Merciful Father, through Holy Baptism You called us to be Your own possession. Grant that our lives may be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing through the working of Your Holy Spirit. Let faith show itself in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, according to the image of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.



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