

The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost
Second to last Sunday of the Church Year
November 14, 2021

Sing Praise to God, the Highest Good Lutheran Service Book 819, Lutheran Worship 452, The Lutheran Hymnal 19



1 Sing praise to God, the high - est good, The au - thor of cre -
2 What God's al - might - y pow'r has made, In mer - cy He is
3 We sought the Lord in our dis - tress; O God, in mer - cy
4 He nev - er shall for - sake His flock, His cho - sen gen - er -



a - tion, The God of love who un - der - stood
keep - ing. By morn - ing glow or eve - ning shade
hear us. Our Sav - ior saw our help - less - ness
a - tion; He is their ref - uge and their rock,



Our need for His sal - va - tion. With heal - ing balm our
His eye is nev - er sleep - ing. With - in the king - dom
And came with peace to cheer us. For this we thank and
Their peace and their sal - va - tion. As with a moth - er's



souls He fills And ev - 'ry faith - less mur - mur stills:
of His might All things are just and good and right:
praise the Lord, Who is by one and all a - dored:
ten - der hand, He leads His own, His cho - sen band:



To God all praise and glo - ry!
To God all praise and glo - ry!
To God all praise and glo - ry!
To God all praise and glo - ry!

5 All who confess Christ's holy name,
 Give God the praise and glory.
 Let all who know His pow'r proclaim
 Aloud the wondrous story.
 Cast ev'ry idol from its throne,
 For God is God, and He alone:
 To God all praise and glory!

Public domain

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. (*Psalms 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. (*Psalms 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. (*Psalms 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 *Psalms 48:11–14*; antiphon *Mark 13:13b*

L The one who endures to the end
 will be saved.

C Let Mount Zion be glad!

Let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of your judgments!

L Walk about Zion, go around her, number her towers,
 consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels,

C that you may tell the next generation that this is God, our God forever and ever.
 He will guide us forever.

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 The one who endures to the end
 will be saved.

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: O Lord, by Your bountiful goodness release us from the bonds of our sins, which by reason of our weakness we have brought upon ourselves, that we may stand firm until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

Daniel 12:1–3

¹“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. ²And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

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

Gradual Revelation 7:14; Psalm 84:5

- L** These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.
- C** They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
- L** Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
- C** in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

Psalm 16

- L** ¹Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
- C** ²I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.”
- L** ³As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.
- C** ⁴The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips.
- L** ⁵The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.
- C** ⁶The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.
- L** ⁷I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.
- C** ⁸I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
- L** ⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.

- C** ¹⁰For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.
L ¹¹You make known to me the path of life;
C in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Hebrews 10:11–25

¹¹Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them

after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put my laws on their hearts,

and write them on their minds,”

¹⁷then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Mark 13:13b

L Alleluia, Alleluia.

C The one who endures to the end will be saved. Alleluia.

Mark 13:1–13

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 13th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹As [Jesus] came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” ²And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

³And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴“Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?” ⁵And Jesus began to say to them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁶Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. ⁷And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁸For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

⁹“But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. ¹⁰And the

gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.¹¹ And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.¹² And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death.¹³ And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

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.

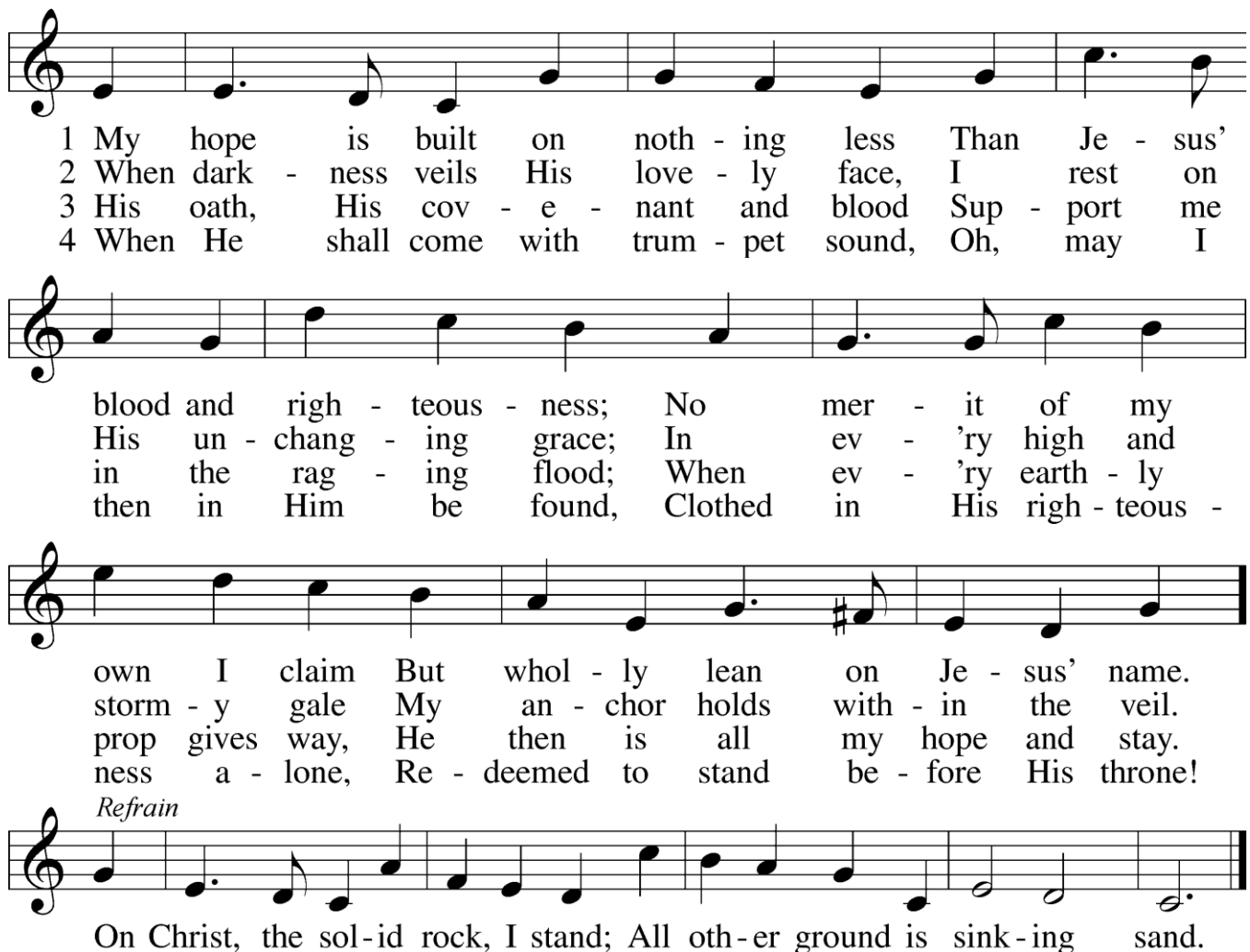
and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.

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.

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less Lutheran Service Book 575, Lutheran Worship 370, The Lutheran Hymnal 368



1 My hope is built on nothing less Than Je - sus'
 2 When dark - ness veils His love - ly face, I rest on
 3 His oath, His cov - e - nant and blood Sup - port me
 4 When He shall come with trum - pet sound, Oh, may I

blood and righ - teous - ness; No mer - it of my
 His un - chang - ing grace; In ev - 'ry high and
 in the rag - ing flood; When ev - 'ry earth - ly
 then in Him be found, Clothed in His righ - teous -

own I claim But whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.
 storm - y gale My an - chor holds with - in the veil.
 prop gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.
 ness a - lone, Re - deemed to stand be - fore His throne!

Refrain

On Christ, the sol-id rock, I stand; All oth-er ground is sink-ing sand.

Devotional Thoughts:

I think we can all agree that living during this pandemic has been awful. We want it to go away. But there is one silver lining. It came at a time when technology is starting to make our homes look like the Jetsons. From young to old, most of us have screens. We can download worship services such as this. Even better, we can see loved ones both near and far.

But screen-time is never as good as real in-person, face-to-face contact. For about a year, we worshiped at home watching the services on YouTube, Facebook, and the like. It's a blessing to be able to visit a variety of churches from the comfort of my easy chair. But there is nothing like being in church and singing with the saints on Sunday morning. Now more than ever, we need to hear the words of Hebrews 10:24-25, "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

From the time of my earliest memories, I have learned about the people and places recorded in the Bible. I remember my grandmother standing at the sink in her kitchen and discussing the Bible with me when I was about 7 years old. As I grew and believed that God was leading me to become a pastor, I determined to learn all that I could about the Holy Land. Being raised in a family of limited means and perusing a profession with low salary expectations, I never believed that I would actually see the places where Jesus walked. But by the grace of God, I was allowed to visit Jerusalem and see the places I had studied for decades. It was an amazing, unexpected blessing.

Everything was better in person. Of course, I had not only read the Bible. I had searched books and seen countless videos and documentaries on the Bible lands but nothing compared to the real thing. One of the most extraordinary and impressive experiences was visiting the Temple Mount.

I learned about the temple in Sunday school. I studied models of the temple and 3D virtual reconstructions on my computer. I visited the now-closed Holy Land Experience in Orlando but nothing prepared me for the real thing. It is a massive 37-acre site. The Western (or Wailing) Wall is 105 feet tall although only 62 feet of it is visible today above the ground. As imposing as this wall is, it is just a foundational retaining wall. Nothing of the original temple or surrounding structure remains.

In Mark 11:27, we learn that Jesus was walking in the temple. From that time, through chapter 12 and up to our Gospel lesson for today, Jesus is challenged over and over again by His opponents. The chief priests, the scribes, the elders, the Pharisees, the Herodians, and the Sadducees each come in turn to confront Jesus. This all takes place during what we call Holy Week. Soon His opponents will finalize their plans to arrest him by stealth and kill him (Mark 14:1). It is unsurprising then that Jesus would turn his teaching to the last days and what would happen when He was gone from the earth.

Today, the Temple Mount is a wonderful place even if it is just the foundation of the buildings from Jesus' time. We can only imagine how impressive it was to the disciple who pointed out the magnificent stones and buildings to Jesus. But they would all soon be gone. Jesus declared, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled when the Romans completely and thoroughly destroyed the temple in A.D. 70.

From the Mount of Olives, you can see the Temple Mount and the expanse of Jerusalem. From that vantage point, Jesus privately instructed Peter and James and John and Andrew concerning the future. It wasn't a rosy picture.

False teachers, false prophets, and false Christs will all seek to lead the faithful astray. Wars and rumors of wars will challenge the faith of God's people. Earthquakes and famines will ravage the earth. Christians will be persecuted by earthly rulers. But none of that will prevent the spread of the Gospel!

Although God's people will be hated because they love Jesus, nothing will stop them. The Holy Spirit will give us the proper words and the proper time to tell of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. We must never become discouraged because of the difficulty we face. The road may be long but the faithful will endure!

The end of the Church Year gives us the opportunity to remember that Jesus did not promise heaven on earth. We should never expect the day to come when Christian morals and values will be accepted by unbelievers.

While we continue to live in a sinful world, life will be hard. But we need not fear. Jesus has conquered sin, death, and the devil. God will give us the strength each day to live by faith and not by sight. During these difficult times, let us encourage one another to love and good works! Because the one who endures to the end will be saved!

“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 O Lord God, the times and seasons of our lives are in Your hands. Grant that we would place our trust in Your grace and mercy for every blessing until at last when our names are found written in Your Book of Life and we shall join You for all eternity in the resurrection of the dead through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

L O Lord God, thank You for the perfect sacrifice of Jesus offered for us on the cross and the forgiveness of sins won for us there. As He has loved us, stir up in us our love for one another that we would encourage each other in faith and worship as the day of His return draws near.

C Amen.

L O Lord God, thank You for Your daily presence. As we witness distressful things happening in the world, grant us endurance of faith that we would not lose heart. Move us to call upon You in times of trouble trusting that You hear our prayers and grant us deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.



1 Ye watch - ers and ye ho - ly ones, Bright
 2 O high - er than the cher - u - bim, More
 3 Re - spond, ye souls in end - less rest, Ye
 4 O friends, in glad - ness let us sing, Su -



ser - apts, cher - u - bim, and thrones, Raise the glad strain:
 glo - rious than the ser - a - phim, Lead their prais - es:
 pa - tri - archs and proph - ets blest: "Al - le - lu - ia,
 per - nal an - thems ech - o - ing: "Al - le - lu - ia,



"Al - le - lu - ia!" Cry out, do - min - ions, prince - doms,
 "Al - le - lu - ia!" Thou bear - er of the e - ter - nal
 al - le - lu - ia!" Ye ho - ly Twelve, ye mar - tyrs
 al - le - lu - ia!" To God the Fa - ther, God the



pow'rs, Vir - tues, arch - an - gels, an - gels'
 Word, Most gra - cious, mag - ni - fy the
 strong, All saints tri - um - phant, raise the
 Son, And God the Spir - it, Three in



choirs: "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -
 Lord: "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -
 song: "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -
 One: "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -



lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!"
 lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!"
 lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!"
 lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!"

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 Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

November 15 –20, 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 48:11–14; antiphon Mark 13:13b

- L** The one who endures to the end
will be saved.
C Let Mount Zion be glad!
Let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of your judgments!
L Walk about Zion, go around her, number her towers,
consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels,
C that you may tell the next generation that this is God, our God forever and ever.
He will guide us forever.
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 The one who endures to the end
will be saved.

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'm not sure why but I'm a Sherlock Holmes fan. I like the original stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. I like the old movies with Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. I like the Old Time Radio Series.

Sherlock has an amazingly keen sense of observation. He deduces remarkable amounts of information from the tiniest clues.

I'm no Sherlock Holmes but I've learned that there is much to be gleaned from the details found in the lessons.

One of the details that shouldn't be overlooked this week is the antiphon for our introit. Normally, we expect that the antiphon will be a verse from the psalm that comprises the body of the introit. But this week something quite out of the ordinary happened. The antiphon is the final verse of the Gospel lesson! Sherlock Holmes would certainly conclude that this verse is extraordinarily significant for understanding our theme for the Second to Last Sunday of the Church Year!

"The one who endures to the end will be saved." This verse is a word of encouragement for all of us. Most of us live through times of discouragement but those times should not dominate our thinking. Whatever is causing us pain and sorrow will come to an end.

The Christian faith does, however, require endurance. We are not in a sprint but a marathon. Don't come up short but keep Your eyes fixed on Jesus until the race is over. As one famous confirmation verse states, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Finally, at the end, you will be saved. What does it mean to be saved? The rest of Psalm 48 is a reflection on salvation. Salvation means gladness. Salvation means living with God forever and ever. That is the definition of joy! Our joy is so great that we cannot contain ourselves. We must tell the next generation! This is why the Lutheran Church has been so heavily invested in Christian Schools.

Let us pray: O Lord of heaven and earth, we anxiously await the day when we will dwell with You in the heavenly mansions forever. Give to us the energy and enthusiasm to "tell the next generation" what You have done for us in Jesus. Amen.

Tuesday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Mark 13:13b

L Alleluia, Alleluia.

C The one who endures to the end will be saved. 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: O Lord, by Your bountiful goodness release us from the bonds of our sins, which by reason of our weakness we have brought upon ourselves, that we may stand firm until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

I am learning amazing things as I grow older. I am learning that common knowledge facts are no longer commonly known.

In talking with young pastors, I was not surprised that what I considered to be the Lutheran church worker ethos was not passed on to them in seminary. After all, times change, and most of that was transmitted by osmosis. But I am surprised when what was once required is no longer known.

This came to mind as I read the collect for this week. In it, we ask the Lord to “release us from the bonds of our sins.” The term “besetting sin” came immediately to mind. Then I thought to myself, “I doubt anyone knows or uses that term anymore.” So I went on a quest to discover its origin.

The idea of “besetting sin” comes from the King James translation of Hebrews 12:1, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.” Of course, only a few in the Lutheran Church continue to use the King James Version. Even fewer use the word “beset.” The ESV translates this phrase from Hebrews 12:1 in this way, “Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely.” The NIV reads, “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.”

The Greek word translated as “beset” (KJV), “clings” (ESV), and “entangles” (NIV) is *euperistatos*. It is a compound word that means “well surrounded” or “easily encircled.” It conveys the idea of a runner surrounded in such a way as being thwarted in every direction, that is, he or she can’t get away. Imagine a horse that is a favorite in the Kentucky Derby being surrounded by horses in the pack so it can’t get away. The same thing happens to runners in long races in the Olympics, etc.

That’s the besetting sin. It seems that each of us has a weakness for one particular sin or a type of sin. It may be something that doesn’t appear to bother others as much but it is something we struggle with.

This one sin besets us. It clings to us. It entangles us. In our collect, we pray that God would strengthen us to resist this besetting sin. We pray that in His bountiful goodness, we will stand firm in our faith until the end. May this always be true for us.

Let us pray: O Lord, by Your bountiful goodness release us from the bonds of our sins, which by reason of our weakness we have brought upon ourselves, that we may stand firm until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, 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.

G Amen.

Verse of the Day: Mark 13:13b

L Alleluia, Alleluia.

G The one who endures to the end will be saved. Alleluia.

Psalms 16

L ¹Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

G ²**I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.”**

L ³As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.

G ⁴**The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips.**

L ⁵The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

G ⁶**The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.**

L ⁷I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.

G ⁸**I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**

L ⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.

G ¹⁰**For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.**

L ¹¹You make known to me the path of life;

G **in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

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.

Murfreesboro, Arkansas is located in southwest Arkansas. It has a population of about 1,600. You may be more familiar with Murfreesboro, Tennessee. It is about 100 times larger than Murfreesboro, Arkansas. It has a population of over 150,000. But Murfreesboro in Arkansas has something that its big brother in Tennessee doesn't have. It has a diamond mine!

At Crater of Diamonds State Park in Murfreesboro, Arkansas you can search for diamonds. Visitors who find diamonds are allowed to keep them. In 1924, the largest diamond ever discovered in the United States was found there. It weighed 40.23 carats. Over 33,000 diamonds have been found there since the opening of the park in 1972.

I am thinking of diamonds today because Psalm 16 is a diamond in scripture waiting to be found. It has some wonderful words about God and His love for us. But there is more to this Psalm than what meets the eye at first glance. Like a diamond in the rough, it is easily missed by those who don't take time to look at it more carefully.

Both Peter and Paul saw the treasure in this Psalm. Peter quoted it in his Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:22-41). Paul quoted it in his sermon at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:13-43).

Both Peter and Paul recognized Psalm 16:10 as a prophecy that was fulfilled in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. If you have the time, read Peter and Paul's sermons to learn how wonderful it is to know that Jesus died and rose from the dead for us and our salvation.

Because Jesus rose, we too shall rise! We will live in God's presence where there is fullness of joy! At God's right hand are pleasures forevermore!

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for the gift of Your word in Holy Scripture. Move us to be diligent in our study of Your word so that our faith and love may grow 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: Mark 13:13b

L	Alleluia, Alleluia.
C	The one who endures to the end will be saved. 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.

Daniel 12:1–3

¹“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. ²And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³And those who

are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

I spent a large amount of time with my mother during the pandemic. She was an avid consumer of the news and totally knowledgeable about current events.

Like many of us, she was concerned about the constant flow of distressing reports that fill our news programs and talk shows. While I didn't always agree with her analysis, we both agreed that we live in a time of trouble. She was also very knowledgeable of scripture. So as her resident theologian, she would sometimes ask me, "Do you think that this is end of the world?"

There are many reasons to ask this question. The pandemic, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, political unrest, and the general acrimony that has captured our society are just a few of the troubles we face.

She was not the first to believe that she was living in the last times. In Luther's Preface to Daniel, he says that chapter twelve has to do "with these last times in which we are living" (Luther's Works, V. 35, page 313).

I don't know if we're living in the last times. We may well be. Those who follow the Church Year must consider the last times every year.

We know that all things come to an end. God will one day bring all this that we experience to an end. When He does, those who have died will rise from the dead! Those who have put their trust in Jesus will rise to eternal life. Those who have rejected the salvation that God provides will get their wish. They will live for eternity without God in shame and everlasting contempt.

My mother didn't make it to the end of the world. I may not either. Neither may you. But each of us will have an end. But we do not need to fear the end the world or the end of our lives here on earth. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Prayer: Almighty and most gracious God, we live in a time of trouble. We do not know if this is the time of trouble that Daniel writes about. But grant us the faith to trust in the deliverance that You have promised to us in Christ. Move us to use wisely the time You have given to us as we await the return of Jesus and the life of the world to come, through the same 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: Mark 13:13b

L Alleluia, Alleluia.

C The one who endures to the end will be saved. 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.

Hebrews 10:11–25

¹¹Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them
after those days, declares the Lord:
I will put my laws on their hearts,
and write them on their minds,”

¹⁷then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Three Oaks is a town in southwest Michigan. It's on the train route from Detroit to Chicago. When I was young, I found a Canadian penny minted in 1900 near the train station. It has also been the home of the Dewey Cannon since 1900. I wonder if my penny was lost by a visitor who came to see the cannon.

Three Oaks is also the home of the Warren Featherbone Company Office Building. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. Featherbone was invented by Edward Kirk Warren. It was made out of turkey feather quills. It replaced whalebone stays used in women's dresses and corsets.

The Dewey Cannon was already more than thirty years obsolete when it was dedicated in Three Oaks. No one needs featherbone or corsets anymore. They had their uses at one time but no more.

Likewise, the temple sacrifices in Jerusalem are no longer needed. Jesus offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins. The temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 and God has not permitted it to be built again because it, too, is no longer needed.

On the cross, Jesus declared, “It is finished.” That was His public announcement that sin was totally and completely paid for. There is nothing that you or I can do to add to His perfect sacrifice. Our paltry attempts to pay for our sins are unneeded. He has done it all for us!

Prayer: Almighty, everlasting God, You gave Your only Son to be a High Priest. Grant that we would fully trust in His perfect sacrifice for sin through the same 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 Revelation 7:14; Psalm 84:5

L These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

C They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

L Blessed are those whose strength is in you,

C in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

Verse of the Day: Mark 13:13b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia.
C The one who endures to the end will be saved. 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.

Hebrews 10:19–25

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

When I read these words from Hebrews, I could not help but think of Sunday morning and these words from the liturgy:

Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

I heard them every Sunday sitting in church with my family. When I first became a pastor, I spoke them every Sunday.

Today, I don't hear them very often. They come from what was once known as "The Common Service." This meant that it is the service that at the time was common or shared by all English-speaking Lutherans.

In doing some research, I found this common service in a hymnal published in 1868 titled *Church Book for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Congregation*. It appears in the first English hymnal published by the LCMS in 1918. Besides the United States, it was used by English speaking-Lutherans in Canada, England, and Australia.

This exhortation to confession from The Common Service echoes well the words of Hebrews 10:22, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Something that appears to be lost in our modern society is how dangerous it is for sinful people to approach our holy, almighty God! Isaiah was totally aware of this as we learn in Isaiah 6. There Isaiah hears the angels in heaven sing:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

To this Isaiah responds, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

God's people of the Old Testament were also fully aware of the peril in approaching their holy God. The temple was off-limits to unbelievers. Only priests could enter the holy place. Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

But now, sinful people can draw near to God! The high priest could only approach God's inner sanctuary one day a year to sprinkle sacrificial blood on the Mercy Seat. But we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus! We draw near to God with a true heart confessing our sins and He grants us forgiveness for the sake of Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Prayer: O Almighty and Holy Lord, thank You for the privilege of approaching Your throne of grace. Grant that we would never tire of hearing the words of forgiveness granted to us by Jesus' sacrifice of Himself on the cross, in His name we pray. Amen.

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