

Home worship service during time of isolation and social distancing.

The Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 21, 2020

Today we enter the second half of the Church Year. The color for this part of the Church Year is green. Green is the color of growth. The first half of the Church Year was a recounting of Jesus' life. The second half of the Church Year focuses on Christian life and growth.

Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus Lutheran Service Book 685, Lutheran Worship 381, The Lutheran Hymnal 409

1 Let us ev - er walk with Je - sus, Fol - low His ex -
am - ple pure, Flee the world, which would de-ceive us And to
sin our souls al - lure. Ev - er in His foot-steps tread-ing,
Bod - y here, yet soul a - bove, Full of faith and
hope and love, Let us do the Fa - ther's bid-ding. Faith-ful
Lord, a - bide with me; Sav - ior, lead, I fol - low Thee.

2 Let us suffer here with Jesus,
To His image e'er conform;
Heaven's glory soon will please us,
Sunshine follow on the storm.
Though we sow in tears of sorrow,
We shall reap with heav'nly joy;
And the fears that now annoy
Shall be laughter on the morrow.
Christ, I suffer here with Thee;
There, oh, share Thy joy with me!

3 Let us also die with Jesus.
His death from the second death,
From our soul's destruction, frees us,
Quickens us with life's glad breath.
Let us mortify, while living,

Flesh and blood and die to sin;
And the grave that shuts us in
Shall but prove the gate to heaven.
Jesus, here I die to Thee
There to live eternally.

4 Let us gladly live with Jesus;
Since He's risen from the dead,
Death and grave must soon release us.
Jesus, Thou art now our Head,
We are truly Thine own members;
Where Thou livest, there live we.
Take and own us constantly,
Faithful Friend, as Thy dear brethren.
Jesus, here I live to Thee,
Also there eternally.

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 56:3–4, 10–11; antiphon: Psalm 56:13;

L For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling,
that I may walk before God in the light of life.

C When I am afraid,

I put my trust in you.

L In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.
What can flesh do to me?

C In God, whose word I praise,
in the Lord, whose word I praise,

L in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?

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 For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling,
that I may walk before God in the light of life.

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 God, because Your abiding presence always goes with us, keep us aware of Your daily mercies that we may live secure and content in Your eternal love; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

Jeremiah 20:7–13

⁷O LORD, you have deceived me,
and I was deceived;
you are stronger than I,
and you have prevailed.
I have become a laughingstock all the day;
everyone mocks me.
⁸For whenever I speak, I cry out,
I shout, “Violence and destruction!”
For the word of the LORD has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.
⁹If I say, “I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name,”
there is in my heart as it were a burning fire
shut up in my bones,
and I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.
¹⁰For I hear many whispering.
Terror is on every side!
“Denounce him! Let us denounce him!”
say all my close friends,

watching for my fall.
“Perhaps he will be deceived;
then we can overcome him
and take our revenge on him.”
¹¹But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior;
therefore my persecutors will stumble;
they will not overcome me.
They will be greatly shamed,
for they will not succeed.
Their eternal dishonor
will never be forgotten.
¹²O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous,
who sees the heart and the mind,
let me see your vengeance upon them,
for to you have I committed my cause.
¹³Sing to the LORD;
praise the LORD!
For he has delivered the life of the needy
from the hand of evildoers.

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

Gradual Psalm 145:3, 5b, 6b

- L** Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.
C **On your wondrous works, I will meditate,**
and I will declare your greatness.

Psalm 91:1–10

- L** ¹He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
C ²I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”
L ³For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.
C ⁴He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
L ⁵You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day,
C ⁶nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.
L ⁷A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
C ⁸You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.
L ⁹Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge—
C ¹⁰no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.
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.

Romans 6:12–23

¹²Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. ¹³Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

²⁰When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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

Verse Matthew 10:32

- 〔L〕 Alleluia. Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. Alleluia.
- 〔C〕 Alleluia. I acknowledge the Lord Jesus as my Savior and God. Alleluia.

Matthew 10:5a, 21–33

- 〔L〕 The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 10th chapter.
- 〔C〕 Glory to You, O Lord.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, . . . ²¹“Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, ²²and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ²³When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

²⁴“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

²⁶“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ²⁷What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³²So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

- 〔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 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

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

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

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.

1 Just as I am, with - out one plea But that Thy
 2 Just as I am and wait - ing not To rid my
 3 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout With man - y a
 4 Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind; Sight, rich - es,

blood was shed for me And that Thou bidd'st me come to
 soul of one dark blot, To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each
 con - flict, man - y a doubt, Fight - ings and fears with - in, with -
 heal - ing of the mind, Yea, all I need, in Thee to

Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

5 Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
 Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
 Because Thy promise I believe,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

6 Just as I am; Thy love unknown
 Has broken ev'ry barrier down;
 Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Public domain

Devotional thoughts:

It seems as though every time there is positive news about this pandemic, there is some negative news or set back. To make matters worse our nation seems to be more bad-tempered and irritable than in recent memory. For a time we all seemed to be pulling together. Now we seem to be pulling apart.

It is no wonder that you may be experiencing nervousness or anxiety, possibly even fear. Fear is an emotion that can come upon us suddenly or creep up on us slowly. It comes from a sense of danger and is worsened when accompanied by a feeling of helplessness.

Fear is an experience that we all share at various times. It seems to begin early in life. You have probably witnessed it when a calm and cooing baby suddenly begins to cry inconsolably in the arms of a stranger. Tranquility quickly returns when the baby is again cradled in a mother's arms.

Childhood presents many opportunities for us to experience fear. Part of growing up is encountering new and unfamiliar challenges, such as the first day of school, joining a sports team, spending time away from a familiar and comfortable home.

Children, in particular, have anxiety because they are often helpless and vulnerable. Yet in another sense children can display what seems to be fearlessness. This may simply be an ignorance of the dangers they face. One key job of every parent is to child-proof the home and to educate children concerning the hazards and perils of life.

As we grow older, we become more aware of these threats to our safety. The so-called “innocence of childhood” is lost. For some children, this may happen all too soon because of an unfortunate home life or tragedy. Adulthood brings with it the sobering truth that the world contains some truly fearful dangers.

One of these dangers is our current pandemic. We all feel helpless in the face of the dire consequences that we as individuals must face but also all of our family and friends.

Not all fear is bad. It causes us to take reasonable precautions. We lock our doors. We look both ways when we cross the street. We wash our hands. We wear masks in the store. Much of life is simply learning about dangers and how to deal with them with a minimum of fear and anxiety.

Yet fear is real. It is something we all must confront. For this reason, it is mentioned over 400 times in the Bible!

Sometimes “fear” is encouraged as a good thing, such as “the fear of the Lord.” Scripture calls upon us to stand in awe of our holy and almighty God. Psalm 33:8 tells us, “Let all the earth **fear** the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in **awe** of him!” There is nothing casual about our interactions with the Creator of the universe!

Learning proper fear and respect for God is part of becoming mature in our faith. Psalm 110:10 declares, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

Other times fear is something to be avoided, reduced, and banished from our lives. Jesus has much to say about fear. Fear is mentioned eleven times in the Gospel of Matthew. Four of those times are found in the Gospel lesson for today.

Jesus warns His disciples that they will have to contend with enemies. Because they follow Jesus, the foes of Jesus will hate them, persecute them, and deliver them over to death. This is indeed frightening. So Jesus deals with their fear.

In verse 36, Jesus tells His disciples, “Have no fear of them.” The light of the gospel will win out. They may be able to harm the body but they cannot kill the soul!

To be sure, Jesus has come precisely to overcome our fear of death. Death has been a fearful foe to all of humanity. But Jesus’ death on the cross has conquered death. Our Easter reality is eternal life! We recall the words of the angel, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay” (Matthew 28:5-6).

Until that time when we join with all the company of heaven in the Church Triumphant, we are still faced with earthly fear. Jesus gives us comfort for our earthly pilgrimage as well. Sparrows were plentiful. Two could be bought for a penny! Yet, your Heavenly Father cares for each one of them. He cares for you infinitely more! In fact, He is so intimately attentive to all the details of your life that He has counted all the hairs on your head! Jesus, Himself, will stand before the almighty God on your behalf and speak up for you!

Now, as always, is a time for us to remember that God has promised to never leave you nor forsake you! (Hebrews 13:5). I pray that we will be able to cast all your cares and anxiety on the Lord because He cares for you! (1 Peter 5:7).

“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 4:6-7).

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

L Faithful God, when we are fearful of our enemies and weary of the struggle, You have been our shield and our strength. Grant to us the full measure of Your grace to sustain us against all who are against us, and help us to endure the trials and temptations of this mortal life and be faithful unto death.

C Amen.

L Faithful God, with Your favor upon us, we pray You to help us in our fight against temptation and sin. Help us to live holy and righteous lives by the power of Your Spirit, and keep us from surrendering ourselves to the slavery from which Christ has set us free.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, in this time of national distress and distrust, give our leaders wisdom for the challenges ahead. Send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. Protect all who attend to our needs during this time of national emergency and pandemic.

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.

783 Take My Life and Let It Be



1 Take my life and let it be Con-se - crat - ed, Lord, to Thee;
2 Take my hands and let them move At the im - pulse of Thy love;
3 Take my voice and let me sing Al-ways, on - ly for my King;
4 Take my sil - ver and my gold, Not a mite would I with - hold;



Take my mo - ments and my days, Let them flow in cease-less praise.
Take my feet and let them be Swift and beau - ti - ful for Thee.
Take my lips and let them be Filled with mes - sag - es from Thee.
Take my in - tel - lect and use Ev - 'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

6 Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

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 Week of The Second Sunday after Pentecost

June 22 - 27

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 56:3–4, 10–11; antiphon: Psalm 56:13;

- L** For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling,
that I may walk before God in the light of life.
C When I am afraid,
I put my trust in you.
L In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.
What can flesh do to me?
C In God, whose word I praise,
in the Lord, whose word I praise,
L in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?
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 For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling,
that I may walk before God in the light of life.

Our introit for this week begins the theme of dealing with fear. David wrote Psalm 56 during a time when the whole world was against him. On one hand, he was fleeing Saul and on the other, he was dealing with the Philistines.

In verse 3, David says, "When I am afraid." It is important to note that this Old Testament hero of the faith is not ashamed to admit, "I am afraid!"

Fear comes to all of us. It comes to those with great faith such as David and it comes to those of little faith.

In verses 1 & 2, David states his reason for fear. His enemies are trampling him. They are taking pride in

attacking him. What shall he do? His answer is to trust in the Lord!

It is a terrible thing to live with unresolved fear. We can imagine David's stomach doing flip flops in anxiety. Still, this fear had a purpose. It turned his heart to the Lord!

All of Psalm 56 leads up to the final verse, "You have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life." David is ultimately convinced that God delivers him from dangers for time and eternity.

We thank God that we know this, too! All of our times and seasons are in the hands of a loving God who sent Jesus to be our savior who is our light of life (John 1:4).

Collect for peace

L Let us pray. O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

Tuesday

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

C Amen.

Verse Matthew 10:32

L Alleluia. Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. Alleluia.

C Alleluia. I acknowledge the Lord Jesus as my Savior and God. Alleluia.

L Let us pray. O God, because Your abiding presence always goes with us, keep us aware of Your daily mercies that we may live secure and content in Your eternal love; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

Life is more difficult during this pandemic. So many of the things we normally take for granted have become a struggle. Even with the "Stay at Home" order in Michigan ending, we all still must be careful. Shopping must be kept to a minimum. We must stay away from close contact with strangers and even friends. Trips to barbershops and beauty salons still seem to be off-limits.

From this, we have been reminded that life is a series of meeting our needs day by day! Our prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread" takes on a sense of urgency.

Without God's daily blessing, no one would survive. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches us this important truth, God "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). Even unbelievers must unknowingly rely on God's abundant mercy and favor!

As believers, we pray that God would keep us aware of His daily mercies. They are simple reminders of God's eternal love for us in Christ.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of food and clothing, house and home, and all You have provided and for all those whose labor brings Your daily blessings to us. Grant that we may be strengthened for Your service as we await with joy the feast You have prepared for all the faithful in Your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday

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

Verse Matthew 10:32

L Alleluia. Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. Alleluia.
C Alleluia. I acknowledge the Lord Jesus as my Savior and God. Alleluia.

Psalm 91:1–10

L ¹He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
C ²I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”
L ³For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.
C ⁴He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
L ⁵You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day,
C ⁶nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.
L ⁷A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.
C ⁸You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.
L ⁹Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge—
C ¹⁰no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.
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.

My mother and I had the pleasure and delight to witness a robin lay eggs and raise her young in a nest next to her front door. We watched every day as first there was one egg, then two, and finally, three.

One by one, each of the chicks emerged from their eggs. They were so tiny and helpless.

But with tender loving care and constant feeding, they soon became big and strong. The last time I saw them, I couldn't believe that they were still able to fit in the nest.

Psalm 91:4 asks us to think of God protecting us as a parent bird protects and provides for chicks. In times of trouble, we all need someplace to shelter and hide. God provides that refuge for us.

We may choose to leave the safety of God's side and protection but the wise believer makes the Lord our dwelling place. May we always come to Him who cares for us and dwell in His presence for time and eternity.

Prayer: Almighty and ever-living God, You watch over us day by day and care for our needs of body and soul. Grant to us the desire and ability to do those things that are good and acceptable in Your sight. Let Your fatherly hand ever guide us and Your Holy Spirit ever be with us to direct us in the knowledge and obedience of Your Word that we may obtain everlasting life; 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 Matthew 10:32

L Alleluia. Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. Alleluia.
C Alleluia. I acknowledge the Lord Jesus as my Savior and God. Alleluia.

Jeremiah 20:7–13

⁷O LORD, you have deceived me,
and I was deceived;
you are stronger than I,
and you have prevailed.
I have become a laughingstock all the day;
everyone mocks me.
⁸For whenever I speak, I cry out,
I shout, “Violence and destruction!”
For the word of the LORD has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.
⁹If I say, “I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name,”
there is in my heart as it were a burning fire
shut up in my bones,
and I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.
¹⁰For I hear many whispering.
Terror is on every side!
“Denounce him! Let us denounce him!”
say all my close friends,

watching for my fall.
“Perhaps he will be deceived;
then we can overcome him
and take our revenge on him.”
¹¹But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior;
therefore my persecutors will stumble;
they will not overcome me.
They will be greatly shamed,
for they will not succeed.
Their eternal dishonor
will never be forgotten.
¹²O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous,
who sees the heart and the mind,
let me see your vengeance upon them,
for to you have I committed my cause.
¹³Sing to the LORD;
praise the LORD!
For he has delivered the life of the needy
from the hand of evildoers.

These words from Jeremiah are difficult to read. Jeremiah had a difficult task and life in service to God. It is a common misconception often promoted by preachers of the “prosperity gospel” (which is no gospel at all) that if you live a life that is faithful and pleasing to God, then everything will go right for you. Jeremiah offers the textbook counterexample.

God called upon him to do a most difficult task. He proclaimed the truth of God’s word to people who refused to listen. He brought dire warnings to the people. But his warnings went unheeded. Instead, his enemies beat him, imprisoned him, and plotted against his life.

Many preachers have been called to walk in the footsteps of Jeremiah. They are called to proclaim God’s word but people refuse to listen.

Many Christians are called by God to do the right thing in the face of opposition and adversity. Instead of reward and blessings, they receive anger and hostility from those they try to help.

Nevertheless, Jeremiah is able to end with these words from verse 13, “Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers.” Despite his temporary hardships, he is able to sing praise to the Lord. He knows that God’s ultimate plan for him is salvation.

Jeremiah was unable to see the fulfillment of God’s promise of salvation in Christ. Thanks be to God that we are fully aware of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection for our eternal salvation.

Until we reach eternity, we may face, as Jeremiah did, temporary hardships and persecution as Jesus warned. We join with the Apostle Paul in exclaiming, “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

Prayer:

Though we sow in tears of sorrow,
We shall reap with heav'nly joy;
And the fears that now annoy
Shall be laughter on the morrow.
Christ, I suffer here with Thee;
There, oh, share Thy joy with me!
Amen.

Friday

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

C Amen.

Verse Matthew 10:32

L Alleluia. Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. Alleluia.

C Alleluia. I acknowledge the Lord Jesus as my Savior and God. Alleluia.

Romans 6:12–23

¹²Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. ¹³Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

²⁰When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The memory of slavery is still raw in the lives of the American people. Now would be a good time to remember the words of Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address inscribed in the Lincoln Memorial:

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his

widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

According to an April 2, 2012 article in the New York Times, for many years it was accepted that “618,222 men died in the Civil War, 360,222 from the North and 258,000 from the South — by far the greatest toll of any war in American history.” But the article states that current research shows this number is too low by about 20%.

In the midst of all this death and suffering, it is even more remarkable for Lincoln to encourage, “malice toward none; with charity for all.”

Without making light of the evil of American slavery that spurred the Civil War, St. Paul reminds us that we were all slaves to sin. We worked in service of a terrible master, SIN! This master, Sin, paid his wage, death!

We are still slaves. We are no longer slaves to sin but slaves of God. To Him, we seek to be obedient! Why? “The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Prayer: We implore You, O Lord, in Your kindness to show us Your great mercy that we may be set free from our sins and rescued from the punishments that we rightfully deserve; grant us grace to hold malice toward none and charity for all, 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 145:3, 5b, 6b

L Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.
C **On your wondrous works, I will meditate,
and I will declare your greatness.**

Verse Matthew 10:32

L Alleluia. Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. Alleluia.
C **Alleluia. I acknowledge the Lord Jesus as my Savior and God. Alleluia.**

My mother often watches the TV show, “Leave it to Beaver.” It was originally broadcast from 1957 through 1963. Today, the show is often belittled by “wise” contemporary commentators. However, once you look beyond the setting of a by-gone era, you will begin to see the down-to-earth reality of the show and the dilemmas facing children from every age and culture.

About a month ago, Kenneth Charles Osmond died. He was 76 years old. Ken Osmond became famous playing the character, Eddie Haskell, on “Leave it to Beaver.” You only need a passing knowledge of the show to know that Eddie was a conniving, smart-mouthed best-friend of Beaver’s brother, Wally. Eddie was a know-it-all who was not going to be bound by conventional wisdom.

When it comes to God, most of us fit the “Eddie Haskell” character. We connive to fool God. We seek to manipulate Him to our own wants and desires. We think we can outsmart God.

But God’s ways and His greatness are beyond our comprehension. His way of doing things is always better than ours.

God's way of salvation is sacrificing His Son for each of us. As conniving and smart-mouthed as we sometimes are, as know-it-all as we are in our dealings with an all-wise God, He still loved us and made us His own.

Psalm 145:3, 5b, 6b

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.
On your wondrous works, I will meditate,
and I will declare your greatness.

Prayer: Gracious Father, Your Son grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and all people. Bless, guide, and govern the children and young people of Your Church by Your Holy Spirit, that they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Your Word. Grant that they may serve You well and usefully, developing their talents not for their own sakes but to Your glory and for the welfare of their neighbor. Protect and defend them from all danger and harm, giving Your holy angels charge over them; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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