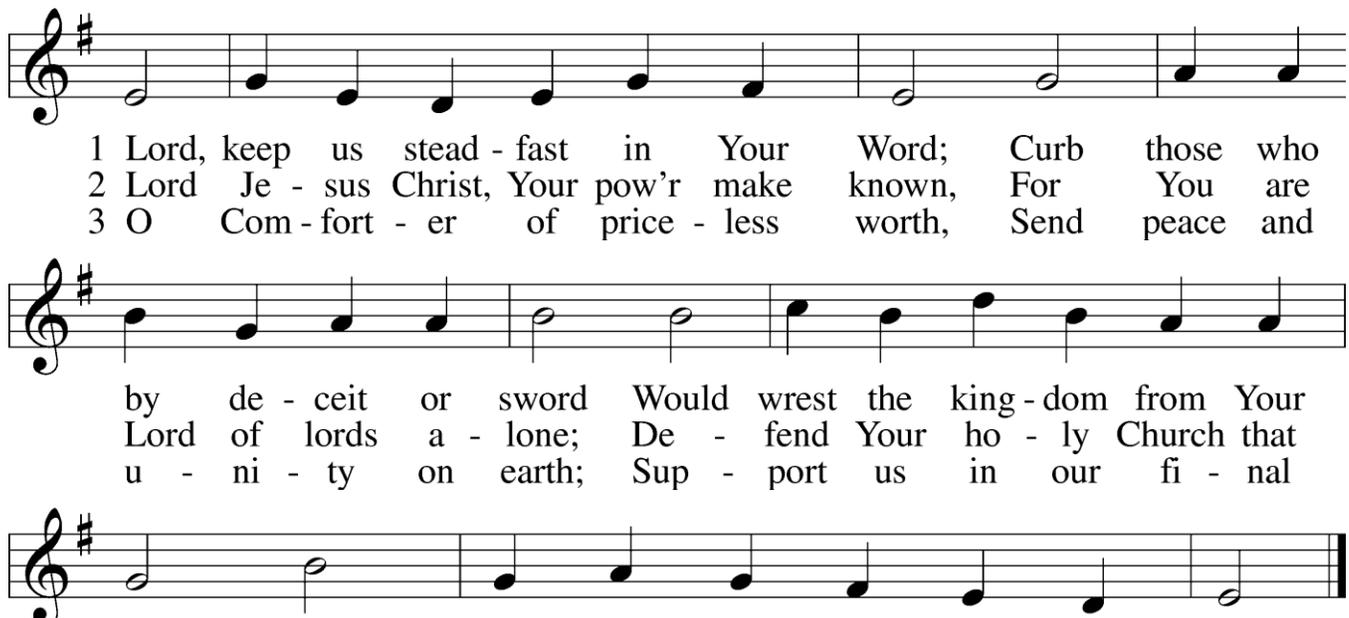


Home worship service during time of isolation and social distancing.

## The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost June 28, 2020

We are in 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.

**Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word** Lutheran Service Book 655, Lutheran Worship 334, The Lutheran Hymnal 261



1 Lord, keep us stead - fast in Your Word; Curb those who  
2 Lord Je - sus Christ, Your pow'r make known, For You are  
3 O Com - fort - er of price - less worth, Send peace and

by de - ceit or sword Would wrest the king - dom from Your  
Lord of lords a - lone; De - fend Your ho - ly Church that  
u - ni - ty on earth; Sup - port us in our fi - nal

Son And bring to naught all He has done.  
we May sing Your praise e - ter - nal - ly.  
strife And lead us out of death to life.

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. (*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 89:15-18; antiphon Psalm 89:1

**L** I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever;  
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.

**C** **Blessèd are the people who know the festal shout,  
who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face,**

**L** who exult in your name all the day  
and in your righteousness are exalted.

**C** **For you are the glory of their strength;  
by your favor our horn is exalted.**

**L** For our shield belongs to the Lord,  
our king to the Holy One of Israel.

**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** I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever;  
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.

### 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 God, by the working of Your Holy Spirit, grant that we may gladly hear Your Word proclaimed among us and follow its directing; 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 28:5–9

<sup>5</sup>Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD, <sup>6</sup>and the prophet Jeremiah said, “Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD make the words that you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. <sup>7</sup>Yet hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in

the hearing of all the people. <sup>8</sup>The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. <sup>9</sup>As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.”

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

### Gradual Romans 11:33, 36

**L** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

**C** For from him and through him and to him are all things.  
To him be glory forever. Amen.

### Psalm 119:153–160

**L** Look on my affliction and deliver me,  
for I do not forget your law.

**C** Plead my cause and redeem me;  
give me life according to your promise!

**L** Salvation is far from the wicked,  
for they do not seek your statutes.

**C** Great is your mercy, O Lord;  
give me life according to your just decrees.

**L** Many are my persecutors and my adversaries,  
but I do not swerve from your testimonies.

**C** I look at the faithless with disgust,  
because they do not keep your commands.

**L** Consider how I love your precepts!  
Give me life according to your steadfast love.

**C** The sum of your word is truth,  
and every one of your just and righteous decrees endures 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.

### Romans 7:1–13

<sup>1</sup>Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? <sup>2</sup>Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. <sup>3</sup>Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

<sup>4</sup>Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. <sup>5</sup>For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. <sup>6</sup>But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

<sup>7</sup>What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” <sup>8</sup>But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law, sin lies dead. <sup>9</sup>I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. <sup>10</sup>The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. <sup>11</sup>For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. <sup>12</sup>So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

<sup>13</sup>Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

**Verse** Matthew 10:39

**L** Alleluia. Whoever finds his life will lose it, Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia. and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Alleluia.

**Matthew 10:34–42**

**L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>34</sup>[Jesus said:] “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup>For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. <sup>36</sup>And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. <sup>37</sup>Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup>And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup>Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

<sup>40</sup>“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. <sup>41</sup>The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. <sup>42</sup>And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

**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.



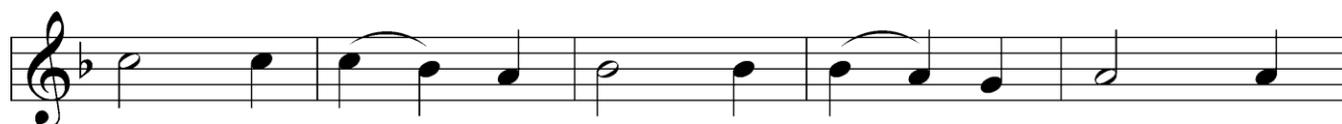
1 Lord of glo - ry, You have bought us With Your  
 2 Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give You Glad - ly,  
 3 Won - drous hon - or You have giv - en To our  
 4 Lord of glo - ry, You have bought us With Your



life - blood as the price, Nev - er grudg - ing for the  
 free - ly of Your own. With the sun - shine of Your  
 hum - blest char - i - ty In Your own mys - te - rious  
 life - blood as the price, Nev - er grudg - ing for the



lost ones That tre - men - dous sac - ri - fice;  
 good - ness Melt our thank - less hearts of stone  
 sen - tence, "You have done it all to Me."  
 lost ones That tre - men - dous sac - ri - fice.



And with that have free - ly giv - en Bless - ings  
 Till our cold and self - ish na - tures, Warmed by  
 Can it be, O gra - cious Mas - ter, That You  
 Give us faith to trust You bold - ly, Hope, to



count - less as the sand To the un - thank - ful  
 You, at length be - lieve That more hap - py  
 deign for alms to sue, Say - ing by Your  
 stay our souls on You; But, oh, best of



and the e - vil With Your own un - spar - ing hand.  
 and more bless - ed 'Tis to give than to re - ceive.  
 poor and need - y, "Give as I have giv'n to you?"  
 all Your grac - es, With Your love our love re - new.

## Devotional thoughts:

Christmas in July is beginning on the Hallmark Channel. I don't know if you are like me but "I need a little Christmas, right this very minute."

In ordinary times, I try my best to keep up with the news. I usually seek a variety of sources to give me some perspective. But recently, I find myself trying to avoid the news as much as possible. It seems that the media glorifies in making life today seem absolutely dreadful. Like I said, "I need a little Christmas."

I long to hear the message from the angels, "Peace on earth. Goodwill toward men." Christmas is such a time of love, joy, peace, and goodwill. Oh, that the Lord would grant this to us all.

Having this longing, it is particularly jarring to hear Jesus' words at the beginning of the Gospel lesson for today, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword."

Why this disconnect? Why does the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) say that He hasn't come to bring peace, but a sword?

A quick and easy answer is this: In Jesus, sinful people now have peace with God. Our sins are taken away. Now we are not only friends with God but part of His family.

The longer answer involves the implications of having peace with God. If we are at peace with God, we can never be at peace with evil. Since God is always divided and separate from evil, so we also must be.

The depth of this division will penetrate even into our own households. It can even divide parents from children.

Jesus says, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." These words are hard to hear. But we must hear them. When family members choose evil over good, we can never join them.

The secular hymn of the day is, "No one can tell me what to do." We are encouraged to accept all kinds of toxic behavior as wholesome. This can never be, so we witness the division that Jesus predicted.

When large parts of society depart from God's word and commands, it becomes extraordinarily uncomfortable for Christian people. Following Jesus soon takes on the nature of a cross!

And so it has always been. Beginning with Stephen, the apostles, and many of the early Christians, faithfulness and peace with God led to martyrdom. In many parts of the world, even today, we witness faithful Christians being persecuted and executed for their faith.

The warning Jesus issues is this, "Whoever finds his life will lose it." If we place our earthly wellbeing above our eternal wellbeing, we are the ultimate losers. When we choose and approve of evil in order to have peace with the world, we will lose the peace that the world cannot give (John 14:27).

While we strive to live disconnected from sin and evil, this does not mean we are called upon to force people to abandon their ways. Unfortunately, throughout history, this has been the attitude of some in the church.

No, in our following of Jesus, we are called upon to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44). As difficult as it may be, we do not resist evil but turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39).

So then what should we do? We should do what Jesus did. We should proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47).

When we pray for our enemies, we pray that they would learn of Jesus and the love has for them. We pray that they would learn that Jesus died on the cross for their sins. We pray that they would repent and receive the forgiveness that He won for them. Then they are no longer our enemies and persecutors.

The Apostle Paul, when he was known as Saul, was a violent persecutor of those who followed Jesus. But God in His mercy brought him to repentance so that Paul became the greatest missionary that the Church has ever known.

We live in a great fellowship of believers. We know peace that the world cannot give. We share love and joy with our brothers and sisters in the faith. We care for the little lambs for whom the Savior died.

We all need a little Christmas. Not tinsel, mistletoe, and Santa Clause. Not Frosty, reindeer, or elves. We need the Savior, who is Christ the Lord!

"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** Our Father in heaven, grant that we may never be friends with evil. Bring your love and peace into the hearts of our enemies that they may become our friends. Grant to us the will and ability to take up our cross and follow Jesus.

**C** Amen.

**L** Our Father in heaven, grant to us the peace that the world cannot give. Let us never grow weary in well doing.

**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.

**O God, My Faithful God** Lutheran Service Book 696, Lutheran Worship 371, The Lutheran Hymnal 395



1 O God, my faith - ful God, True foun-tain ev - er flow - ing,  
2 Grant me the strength to do With read - y heart and will - ing  
3 Keep me from say - ing words That lat - er need re - call - ing;  
4 Lord, let me win my foes With kind - ly words and ac - tions,



With - out whom noth - ing is, All per - fect gifts be - stow - ing:  
What - ev - er You com - mand, My call - ing here ful - fill - ing;  
Guard me lest i - dle speech May from my lips be fall - ing;  
And let me find good friends For coun - sel and cor - rec - tion.



Give me a health - y frame, And may I have with - in  
That I do what I should While trust - ing You to bless  
But when with - in my place I must and ought to speak,  
Help me, as You have taught, To love both great and small



A con-science free from blame, A soul un - stained by sin.  
The out - come for my good, For You must give suc - cess.  
Then to my words give grace Lest I of - fend the weak.  
And by Your Spir - it's might To live in peace with all.

5 Let me depart this life  
Confiding in my Savior;  
By grace receive my soul  
That it may live forever;  
And let my body have  
A quiet resting place  
Within a Christian grave;  
And let it sleep in peace.

6 And on that final day  
When all the dead are waking,  
Stretch out Your mighty hand,  
My deathly slumber breaking.  
Then let me hear Your voice,  
Redeem this earthly frame,  
And bid me to rejoice  
With those who love Your name

Public domain

### 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.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Some liturgical portions are adapted from Lutheran Service Book © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. Lutheran Service Book License: 10002731 Christ Lutheran Church, Stevensville, Michigan

Hymns are in the public domain.

The remainder of this work including adaptations and the Devotional thoughts © 2020 Philip G. Quardokus. All rights reserved.

# 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 Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

#### June 29 – July 4

#### 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 89:15-18; antiphon Psalm 89:1

- L** I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever;  
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.
- C** **Blessèd are the people who know the festal shout,  
who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face,**
- L** who exult in your name all the day  
and in your righteousness are exalted.
- C** **For you are the glory of their strength;  
by your favor our horn is exalted.**
- L** For our shield belongs to the Lord,  
our king to the Holy One of Israel.
- 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** I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever;  
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.

The psalmist sings of God's steadfast love! God's steadfast love is a concept in the Bible that cannot be fully appreciated in English. It is sometimes translated as mercy as in "His mercy endures forever."

Martin Luther speaks of it this way. God's steadfast love is "goodness in action." All of God's favor towards us is summarized in His "steadfast love."

God's steadfast love comes to us in the babe born in Bethlehem. God's steadfast love is "peace on earth, goodwill toward men." God's steadfast love is made real when "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached

to them” (Matthew 11:5). God’s steadfast love is heard from the cross when Jesus prays, “Father, forgive them.” God’s steadfast love is found in the words of the angel at the empty tomb, “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).

God’s steadfast love comes to us by His grace. We receive it by faith in Jesus. God’s steadfast love grants us forgiveness, life, and salvation. It is new to us each day. It is ours for eternity.

We join our voices with the psalmist, “I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations” (Psalm 89:1).

### Collect for peace

**L** Let us pray. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, because of Your steadfast love toward us sinners You have given us Your Son that, believing in Him, we might have everlasting life. Continue to grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may remain steadfast in this faith to the end and finally come to life everlasting; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen

### Tuesday

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

**C** Amen.

**Verse** Matthew 10:39

**L** Alleluia. Whoever finds his life will lose it, Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia. and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Alleluia.

**L** Let us pray. Almighty God, by the working of Your Holy Spirit, grant that we may gladly hear Your Word proclaimed among us and follow its directing; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen

Rowan Atkinson plays a delightfully humorous character by the name of Mr. Bean. If you have seen him, I know that you are smiling already. One of my most favorite clips of Mr. Bean is watching him try to stay awake during the sermon!

Have you ever had that problem? As a child I remember catching my head nodding during the sermon and quickly straightening up only to hit my head on the pew back.

Once on vicarage, I was assigned to preach on the ending of the Lord’s Prayer. My sermon had four parts: Kingdom, Power, Glory, and Amen. After having completed the first three parts of my sermon, I came to the fourth part and began, “And now for the ‘amen’.” At the word “amen” a gentleman in the middle of the church stood straight up! I can only imagine what dinner was like at his house that day.

Sermons have the reputation of being boring and sleep inducing. I am sure that I have delivered my fair share of boring sermons. So why do we continue to attend church and hear boring sermons when there are so many amazing alternatives? Because in the sermon we hear God’s word proclaimed. In the sermon we learn of sin and grace. We learn of God’s abiding love for us. We lean of the Way and the Truth and the Life.

Our collect this week offers this salutary prayer: Grant that we may gladly hear Your Word proclaimed among us.

Prayer: Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes down from

above, that Your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve You and, in the confession of Your name, abide unto the end; 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 10:39

**L** Alleluia. Whoever finds his life will lose it, Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia. and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Alleluia.

**Psalm 119:153–160**

**L** Look on my affliction and deliver me,  
for I do not forget your law.

**C** Plead my cause and redeem me;  
give me life according to your promise!

**L** Salvation is far from the wicked,  
for they do not seek your statutes.

**C** Great is your mercy, O Lord;  
give me life according to your just decrees.

**L** Many are my persecutors and my adversaries,  
but I do not swerve from your testimonies.

**C** I look at the faithless with disgust,  
because they do not keep your commands.

**L** Consider how I love your precepts!  
Give me life according to your steadfast love.

**C** The sum of your word is truth,  
and every one of your just and righteous decrees endures 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.

This week I listened to a reading of Psalm 119. It took almost 16 minutes to complete the entire Psalm! There are 176 verses in all. It is a marvelous ode to God's word containing many memorable passages such as: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). And, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word" (Psalm 119:9).

I suspect this portion of the psalm is chosen for our worship this week because it relates so well to Jesus' words in the Gospel. Verse 157 particularly caught my attention, "Many are my persecutors and my adversaries, but I do not swerve from your testimonies." Even the psalmist faced persecution because of his faithfulness!

It is always difficult to experience criticism for doing the right thing. It is particularly hurtful when we are seeking to be faithful to God's word. Nevertheless, this does happen. It is the lot of every Christian in one way or another.

Why then are we faithful in the face of this persecution? Because in God's holy word we find life! In God's holy word we find salvation. In God's holy word we find our savior, Jesus!

Prayer: Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that, by patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of 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 10:39

**L** Alleluia. Whoever finds his life will lose it, Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia. and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Alleluia.

### Jeremiah 28:5–9

<sup>5</sup>Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD, <sup>6</sup>and the prophet Jeremiah said, “Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD make the words that you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. <sup>7</sup>Yet hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. <sup>8</sup>The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. <sup>9</sup>As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.”

You most likely have heard of the prophet Jeremiah. However, Hananiah may not be so familiar to you. Not much is known of him except that he is the spokesman for the false prophets.

What is the message of the false prophets in this case? Everything will be okay! Jeremiah prays that the Lord would indeed quickly bring back the exiles from Babylon. But Jeremiah knows that this is a false and misleading dream.

It is always dangerous to listen to false prophets whether they preach prosperity or gloom, they always depart from God’s word. Jeremiah knows that peace will not come to the people of Judah and the exiles. He has constantly called them to repentance and they have refused. God has brought this punishment upon them.

Just as the people in Jeremiah’s day, many people today believe that they can ignore God’s law and everything will be just fine. They can continue to live in unrepentant sin without consequences.

Jeremiah knew as we know today, you can’t ignore God’s law. Some may confuse God’s patience with indifference. Let us not make that mistake.

Peter writes, “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief” (2 Peter 3:9-10).

May we heed the words of Isaiah, “Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;” (Isaiah 55:6).

The Apostle Paul’s words are just as true for us today as they were when they were first written to Timothy:

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup> But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup> To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:15-17).

Prayer: O God, let us not confuse your patience with indifference. We thank you that by the patient endurance of Your only-begotten Son You have destroyed sin, death, and the devil. Help us to treasure in our hearts what our Lord has borne for us on the cross. Grant that we may bear with patience those things that are difficult for us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

## Friday

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

**G** Amen.

**Verse** Matthew 10:39

**L** Alleluia. Whoever finds his life will lose it, Alleluia.

**G** Alleluia. and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Alleluia.

### Romans 7:1–13

<sup>1</sup>Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? <sup>2</sup>Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. <sup>3</sup>Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

<sup>4</sup>Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. <sup>5</sup>For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. <sup>6</sup>But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

<sup>7</sup>What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” <sup>8</sup>But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law, sin lies dead. <sup>9</sup>I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. <sup>10</sup>The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. <sup>11</sup>For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. <sup>12</sup>So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

<sup>13</sup>Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

Paul’s Book of Romans is a wonderful treatise on Law and Gospel, Sin and Grace. He wants us to know that God’s law is good. It is perfect. It is beneficial. However, God’s law does not bring life. God’s law shows us that we are not good, we are not perfect.

As we learned in confirmation class, God’s law Shows us Our Sin (SOS). We may want to believe that we are good but God’s law will not let us. It shows our need for Jesus and the Gospel.

The Gospel is God’s life giving word in Jesus. The Gospel Shows us Our Savior (SOS).

These two little phrases concerning Law and Gospel are good to remember. The law always (not only) shows us our sin. Like a mirror it shows us as we truly are. The law always focuses on us and what we do or fail to do.

On the other hand the Gospel never focuses on us. If we read the Gospel in such a way that it makes demands upon a sinner, we have read it improperly. The Gospel always focuses on Christ and what He has done for our salvation. The Gospel always points to Jesus, never to us.

The Law condemns. The Gospel saves. It is the power of God for all who believe (Romans 1:16).

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank and praise You that You gave Your only-begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life. Amen.

## Saturday

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

### Gradual

- L** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!  
**C** For from him and through him and to him are all things.  
To him be glory forever. Amen.

### Verse Matthew 10:39

- L** Alleluia. Whoever finds his life will lose it, Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia. and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Alleluia.

244 years ago the United States of America declared itself to be an independent nation. Surprisingly to many 21<sup>st</sup> Century Americans, the founders of our nation found justification for their actions in the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God! This thought is becoming increasingly important to remember as the religion of secularism has bewitched so many Americans.

A few years back, Valerie and I had the opportunity to take a tour of Baltimore Harbor and see the star spangled banner flying over Fort McHenry from the same location it was observed by Francis Scott Key after witnessing the bombardment by British ships in 1814. On this Independence Day take a moment to read all the stanzas of his poem. Take particular notice of the final stanza its reference to our trust in God!

O say can you see, by the dawn's early light,  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?  
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;  
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,  
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,  
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:  
'Tis the star-spangled banner, O long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore  
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,  
A home and a country, should leave us no more?  
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.  
No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave,  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

O thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation.  
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the Heav'n rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!  
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,  
And this be our motto: 'In God is our trust.'  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Prayer: Lord, keep this nation under Your care. Bless the leaders of our land that we may be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to the other nations of the earth. Grant that we may choose trustworthy leaders, contribute to wise decisions for the general welfare, and serve You faithfully in our generation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Enhancing Your Worship © 2020 Philip G. Quardokus. All rights reserved.