

Home worship service during time of isolation and social distancing.

The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost Independence Day Worship July 5, 2020

One of the greatest concepts in the Bible is the Kingdom of God. Misguided believers in both the Old and the New Testaments confused the Kingdom of God with an earthly kingdom to be established with Jerusalem as its capital city.

In fact, King Jesus does already rule the universe by His almighty power (Eph. 1:15-23). However, He has no interest in a political kingdom. He spoke these words to Pilate, **“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is from another place”** (John 18:36).

Jesus directed His disciples to proclaim, **“The kingdom of God has come near to you.” God’s kingdom comes to us today through the Word and Sacraments. In His kingdom, Jesus brings peace and forgiveness. We enter His kingdom by faith.**

The thief on the cross called out to Jesus, **“Remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” We look forward to the day when our sojourn through this sinful world comes to an end and we are with the Savior forever in His eternal kingdom of paradise in heaven.**

In addition, we rejoice in the freedoms that we enjoy in our nation. Many have sacrificed for our benefit. Yet not everything in our country is in accord with God’s holy word, therefore we do not forget that we must obey God rather than men. It is important for Christian citizens to exercise their rights in a God-pleasing way.

God Bless Our Native Land Lutheran Service Book 965, Lutheran Worship 497, The Lutheran Hymnal 577



1 God bless our na - tive land; Firm may she ev - er stand
2 So shall our prayers a - rise To God a - bove the skies;

Through storm and night. When the wild tem - pests rave, Rul - er of
On Him we wait. Thou who art ev - er nigh, Guard - ing with

wind and wave, Do Thou our coun - try save By Thy great might.
watch - ful eye, To Thee a - loud we cry: God save the state!

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

C Amen.

L We worship God, the Father,

C Who created heaven and earth, who created our nation and every nation, who makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, who is worthy to be praised for the bounty of the land, who loved the world so that he gave his only begotten Son.

Genesis 1:1; Matthew 5:45; Ps. 65:9; John 3:16

L We worship God, the Son,

C The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, who died for the nations, and gives life to all who believe.

John 1:29; John 11:51,52; John 5:24

L We worship God, the Holy Spirit,

C Who is sent by the Father and the Son to work through baptizing and teaching to make disciples of all nations.

John 14:15; John 15:26; Matthew 28:18-20

L Lord, of the nations, to you our country we commend.

C Be her refuge and her fortress, her everlasting friend.

Ps. 91:2

Confession of Sins

L Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;

C O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

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.

Ps. 130:1-4

C Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Judge of all people and nations, we admit and confess our sinfulness. We have turned away from you and each other in our thinking, speaking, and doing. We have done the evil you forbid and have not done the good you demand. Especially do we confess that we have failed as citizens of your kingdom and as citizens of this nation in which we live. We do repent and are truly sorry for these our sins. Have mercy on us, kind Father, because of the obedience of our Brother, Jesus Christ, your Son. Forgive us all that is past, and with the power of the Holy Spirit move us to serve you faithfully. Have mercy on us and set our feet upon the new path of life, and build your kingdom here through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

L Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given his only Son to die for us and for his sake forgives us all our sins. To them that believe on his name he gives the power to become the children of God and has promised them his Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

L Grant this, Lord, unto us all.

C Amen.

Introit Psalm 91:2, 9–10; antiphon Psalm 91:1

L He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

C I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

- L** Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—
the Most High, who is my refuge—
- C** **no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.**
- 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** He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

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: Gracious God, our heavenly Father, Your mercy attends us all our days. Be our strength and support amid the wearisome changes of this world, and at life's end grant us Your promised rest and the full joys of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

The Prayer for Independence Day

All: Lord of all nations, we thank and praise you that You created us for freedom and that you recreated us for freedom in Your holy Gospel. We pray for strength to live up to our obligations in a nation where you have given us great civil and religious freedoms. Help us as people free in Christ to encourage those freedoms throughout the world to open the way for the hearing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Zechariah 9:9–12

- ⁹Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
- ¹⁰I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall speak peace to the nations;
his rule shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹²Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

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 knowl edge 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 145:1–14

L ¹I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.

C ²Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

L ³Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

C ⁴One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

L ⁵On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

C ⁶They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.

L ⁷They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

C ⁸The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

L ⁹The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.

C ¹⁰All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!

L ¹¹They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power,

C ¹²to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

L ¹³Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.
The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.

C ¹⁴The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.

Romans 7:14–25a

¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse Matthew 11:28

L Alleluia. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden.

C and I will give you rest. Alleluia.

Matthew 11:25–30

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 11th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

²⁵At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

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 Be - fore You, Lord, we bow, Our God who reigns a - bove
2 The na - tion You have blest May well Your love de - clare,
3 May ev - 'ry moun - tain height, Each vale and for - est green,
4 Earth, hear your Mak - er's voice; Your great Re - deem - er own;



And rules the world be - low, Bound - less in pow'r and love. Our thanks
From foes and fears at rest, Pro - tect - ed by Your care. For this
Shine in Your Word's pure light, And its rich fruits be seen! May ev -
Be - lieve, o - bey, re - joice, And wor - ship Him a - lone. Cast down



we bring In joy and praise, Our hearts we raise To You, our King!
bright day, For this fair land—Gifts of Your hand—Our thanks we pay.
'ry tongue Be tuned to praise And join to raise A grate - ful song.
your pride, Your sin de - plore, And bow be - fore The Cru - ci - fied.

5 And when in pow'r He comes,
Oh, may our native land
From all its rending tombs
Send forth a glorious band,
A countless throng,
With joy to sing
To heav'n's high King
Salvation's song!

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Devotional thoughts:

“We don't know what we don't know” is a piece of corporate jargon that rings true. Over and over again medical experts and news reporters have warned us concerning our lack of knowledge when it comes to the virus causing our current pandemic. The recent surge of infections across the south underscores our ignorance when it comes to proper procedures and regulations necessary to guide a safe return to normal activities.

This deficiency of human knowledge is not limited to viruses and the physical world. It is also true of the spiritual world. Jesus begins our Gospel lesson for today with these words, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children” (Matthew 11:25).

We continually see examples of those who claim worldly wisdom being woefully ignorant when it comes to God's wisdom! In First Corinthians chapter one, the Apostle Paul elaborates on Jesus' words:

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Corinthians 1:18-25).

Why has God hidden His wisdom from the wise? He has done this so that we may learn to rely on Him just as children learn to rely on and trust their parents.

On this Independence Day weekend and in this election year, when people of all persuasions are attempting to convince us of their intellectual prowess, it is a good time to pause and humble ourselves before God. It is a good time to learn to rely on God.

George Washington, in his first inaugural address on April 30, 1789, set out for us a noble example. He began in humility by admitting to “a distrustful scrutiny into his qualifications.” He went on to acknowledge “inheriting inferior endowments [of intellect] from nature.” Finally, he confessed to being “unpractised in the duties of civil administration” and “conscious of his own deficiencies.”

If this is true, how can he dare take up the task of being the first president of the United States? His answer is a reliance on God! He declared:

It would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official Act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the Universe, who presides in the Councils of Nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the People of the United States, a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes: and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success, the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the Great Author of every public and private good I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own; nor those of my fellow-citizens at large, less than either. No People can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the Affairs of men more than the People of the United States.

If George Washington was aware of his need to rely on God, then how much more must we today?

If we must rely on God for earthly blessings, then we certainly must join with little children to trust that God grants us forgiveness, life, and salvation through the cross of Jesus.

For us who have grown weary of all the turmoil in our country, for us who have grown weary of the dangers of this pandemic, for us who have grown weary of sin and death, Jesus invites us to Himself with these words: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He promises rest not only from the tiresome earthly trials that we face day to day but also rest from the spiritual trials that often overwhelm us. His invitation continues, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

“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.

Prayer for Our Country

☞ Almighty God, you have given us this good land as our heritage. Grant that we remember your

generosity and constantly do your will. Bless our land with honest industry, truthful education, and an honorable way of life. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil course of action. Make us who came from many nations with many different languages a united people. Defend our liberties, and give those whom we have entrusted with the authority of government the spirit of wisdom that there may be justice and peace in our land. When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful; and in troubled times do not let our trust in you fail; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

L Our Creator and Lord, from You all things come and to You are all things directed. Provide for our nation faithful leaders who will hear and heed Your law, protect and defend the citizens, preserve the precious gift of liberty, and inspire us to use our freedom honorably. Make us mindful of the heritage our forebears have given to this land, and guide us to be faithful in our stewardship of all the resources You have provided.

C Amen.

L Our wise and giving God, You are the God of truth and in You is no falsehood or deception. Help us to delight in Your Law, to love what is good and true and right, and to seek after these things. Help us to wage war against the old Adam within us, restore us when we stray from Your Word, and forgive us when we give into the devil's temptations.

C Amen.

L Our loving Father, You have hidden Your greatness from our wisdom and made Your ways known to children. Guide us to bring our children to the waters of Baptism, to raise them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and to know perfect rest and peace within Your loving arms.

C Amen.

L Our gentle God and Lord, You have invited us to come to You with the heavy burdens of this life, that we may find rest and peace in Your mercy. Grant relief to those who struggle, supply to those in need, hope to those who fear, and peace to those who are anxious, that we may be delivered from all adversity and brought to everlasting life, where we shall join the saints of old in Your presence forevermore.

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, Our Help in Ages Past Lutheran Service Book 733, Lutheran Worship 180, The Lutheran Hymnal 123



1 O God, our help in a - ges past, Our hope for years to come,
2 Un - der the shad-ow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt se - cure;
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood Or earth re - ceived her frame,
4 A thou-sand a - ges in Thy sight Are like an eve - ning gone,



Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, And our e - ter - nal home:
Suf - fi - cient is Thine arm a - lone, And our de - fense is sure.
From ev - er - last - ing Thou art God, To end - less years the same.
Short as the watch that ends the night Be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Soon bears us all away;
We fly forgotten as a dream
Dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last
And our eternal home!

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Service Notes:

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

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

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

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

The Week of the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 6 – July 11

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 91:2, 9–10; antiphon Psalm 91:1

- L** He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
- C** I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."
- L** Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge—
- C** no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.
- 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** He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

Whether in the U.S. or Canada, I have always felt safe. I have been confident that our leaders choose measures that protect me from enemies abroad and provide proper police protection to keep me safe from criminals within our borders. (This is not to say that there haven't been times that I have found myself in dangerous situations but I always knew safety was at hand.)

I know that this is not true for everyone. Some people in our country do not live with this confidence. It is certainly not true in many parts of the world. Living in safety is a great blessing.

However, sometimes this confidence can be false security. There may have been times when this confidence was misplaced. There is only one place where we may dwell secure! It is in the shelter of the Most High!

God alone can grant us safety from evil and plague! “On Christ the Solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.”

L Let us pray. O Lord, show Your mercy to us and grant us salvation. Fill Your ministers with righteousness and make Your chosen people joyful. Give peace, O Lord, to the whole world for only in You can we live in safety. Lord, keep this nation under Your care. Guide us in the way of justice and truth. Let Your way be known in all the earth and Your saving grace among all nations. Let not the needy be forgotten nor the hope of the poor be taken away. Create in us clean hearts, O God and sustain us with Your Holy Spirit.

C Amen

Tuesday

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

C Amen.

Verse Matthew 11:28

L Alleluia. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden.

C and I will give you rest. Alleluia.

L Let us pray. Gracious God, our heavenly Father, Your mercy attends us all our days. Be our strength and support amid the wearisome changes of this world, and at life’s end grant us Your promised rest and the full joys of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

As we pray in the collect this week, we live amid “wearisome changes” in this world. Some may respond with the old saw, “Change is good.” Indeed, sometimes change can be good, such as, when we change from our old sinful ways to a new life in Christ. Change is good when we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus for our salvation.

But not all change is good. Most change is quite “wearisome.” In fact, this is the natural state of things. The second law of thermal dynamics makes it inevitable that ultimately everything gradually declines into disorder. Everything eventually wears out. Cars rust. Houses crumble. Clothes tear. Wrinkles appear.

This is why Jesus says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

This is why we sincerely pray to God: “At life’s end grant us Your promised rest and the full joys of Your salvation.”

Prayer: O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of thy Word, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Wednesday

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

Verse Matthew 11:28

- L** Alleluia. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden.
G and I will give you rest. Alleluia.

Psalm 145:1–14

- L** ¹I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.
G ²**Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.**
L ³Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.
G ⁴**One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.**
L ⁵On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
G ⁶**They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.**
L ⁷They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
G ⁸**The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**
L ⁹The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.
G ¹⁰**All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!**
L ¹¹They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power,
G ¹²**to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.**
L ¹³Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.
The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.
G ¹⁴**The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.**

There is much to learn in the first fourteen verses of Psalm 145. Let's take a moment and ponder verse 8, "The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."

How different God is from the world that I am experiencing. He is gracious and merciful.

I spend too much time reading the news and exploring social media. Even if I didn't, it's almost impossible to avoid. If you are anything like me, you have discovered that very few people today find value in graciousness and mercy. Cries abound demanding retribution and revenge. People are not only seeking reprisals against those who are living but also against emblems of those who have died long ago.

We live in a time when society praises anger. Countless individuals have learned to stoke the flames of rage. How different God is! He is slow to anger. More than that, He is abounding in steadfast love.

The Bible constantly teaches us about God's steadfast love. His love is not like our love. We love the loveable. He loves the unlovable. He loves those who don't deserve to be loved. He loves His enemies.

"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: O God, show us, Your servants, the signs of Your gracious and merciful presence. Send forth upon us the Spirit of love, that Your abounding grace may increase among us; 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 11:28

L Alleluia. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden.

C and I will give you rest. Alleluia.

Zechariah 9:9–12

⁹Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall speak peace to the nations;
his rule shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹²Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

You may recognize these words of Zechariah. They are read every year on Palm Sunday as we celebrate Jesus' Triumphal Entry in Jerusalem.

Jesus is a humble king! He never uses force to compel people to submit to His authority. He is a king who comes to save! He comes to save by sacrificing Himself on the cross.

Hosanna. Hosanna.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Prayer: O God, You are the author of peace and lover of harmony. To know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom. Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday

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

G Amen.

Verse Matthew 11:28

L Alleluia. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden.

G and I will give you rest. Alleluia.

Romans 7:14–25a

¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

These words from the Apostle Paul show us his complete honesty with himself! In verses 18 and 19 he writes, “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.”

We all know boasters and braggarts. Sometimes we may have been counted among them. They never make mistakes. Everything they do is always better than you. They always “one-up” anything you say.

When it comes to ordinary things such as cars, boats, clothes, etc., I suppose there is no real harm in this except for the annoyance. But when it comes to spiritual things, arrogance is deadly.

The Pharisees of Jesus’ day were such people. They were so good and righteous that they bristled at the thought of needing a savior. Paul had been one of them. But by the grace of God, Paul’s eyes were opened. He recognized his sin and his need for a savior.

We all are like Paul. We may want to do good, but we can never fully accomplish it! Who will deliver us from this sin and death? Jesus Christ our Lord, who gives us the victory. Thanks be to God!

Prayer: Grant us, O Lord, we pray, the grace to trust in You with all our heart. You always resist the proud who trust in their own strength therefore do not forsake those who make their boast in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. 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 11:28

L Alleluia. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden.

C and I will give you rest. Alleluia.

Before You, Lord, We Bow Lutheran Service Book 966, Lutheran Worship 500, The Lutheran Hymnal 575



1 Be - fore You, Lord, we bow, Our God who reigns a - bove
2 The na - tion You have blest May well Your love de - clare,
3 May ev - 'ry moun - tain height, Each vale and for - est green,
4 Earth, hear your Mak - er's voice; Your great Re - deem - er own;



And rules the world be - low, Bound - less in pow'r and love. Our thanks
From foes and fears at rest, Pro - tect - ed by Your care. For this
Shine in Your Word's pure light, And its rich fruits be seen! May ev -
Be - lieve, o - bey, re - joice, And wor - ship Him a - lone. Cast down



we bring In joy and praise, Our hearts we raise To You, our King!
bright day, For this fair land—Gifts of Your hand—Our thanks we pay.
'ry tongue Be tuned to praise And join to raise A grate - ful song.
your pride, Your sin de - plore, And bow be - fore The Cru - ci - fied.

5 And when in pow'r He comes,
Oh, may our native land
From all its rending tombs
Send forth a glorious band,
A countless throng,
With joy to sing
To heav'n's high King
Salvation's song!

As our Independence Day week draws to a close, we pray that as a nation, we may bow before the Lord and rid ourselves of sinful arrogance. May we sing to heaven's high King Salvation's song!

Prayer: Lord God Almighty, in whose Name the founders of this country won liberty for themselves and for us, and lit the torch of freedom for nations then unborn: Grant, we ask You, that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain these liberties in righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen..

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