

## The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost July 25, 2021

In today's Gospel Lesson, we find terrified disciples. They are in a boat without Jesus. When Jesus comes, their fears are calmed. How often are we also terrified because we try to approach life without the comforting presence of Jesus?

Where do you find Jesus? You find Jesus where He promises to be found, in Word and Sacraments. Trying to find Jesus in our inner spiritual self or nature or any other place is futile. But the Holy Spirit brings us our Beautiful Savior in God's precious and holy word.

**Praise to the Lord, the Almighty** Lutheran Service Book 790, Lutheran Worship 444, The Lutheran Hymnal 39



1 Praise to the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre -  
2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is won - drous - ly  
3 Praise to the Lord, who has fear - ful - ly, won - drous - ly,  
4 Praise to the Lord, who will pros - per your work and de -



a - tion! O my soul, praise Him, for He is your  
reign - ing And, as on wings of an ea - gle, up -  
made you, Health has be - stowed and, when heed - less - ly  
fend you; Sure - ly His good - ness and mer - cy shall



health and sal - va - tion! Let all who hear Now to His  
lift - ing, sus - tain - ing. Have you not seen All that is  
fall - ing, has stayed you. What need or grief Ev - er has  
dai - ly at - tend you. Pon - der a - new What the Al -



tem - ple draw near, Join - ing in glad ad - o - ra - tion!  
need - ful has been Sent by His gra - cious or - dain - ing?  
failed of re - lief? Wings of His mer - cy did shade you.  
might - y can do As with His love He be - friends you.

- 5 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!  
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before Him!  
Let the Amen  
Sound from His people again;  
Gladly forever adore Him!

**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 145:1–3, 6–7; antiphon Psalm 145:5

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

**C** I will extol you, my God and King,  
and bless your name forever and ever.

**L** Every day I will bless you  
and praise your name forever and ever.

**C** Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,  
and his greatness is unsearchable.

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

**C** They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness  
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

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

### Kyrie

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

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

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

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

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

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

- L** Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:
- C** **Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.
- C** **For You alone are the Holy One,  
You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

### Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: Almighty and most merciful God, the protector of all who trust in You, strengthen our faith and give us courage to believe that in Your love You will rescue us from all adversities; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

### Genesis 9:8–17

<sup>8</sup>God said to Noah and to his sons with him, <sup>9</sup>“Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. <sup>11</sup>I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” <sup>12</sup>And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: <sup>13</sup>I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” <sup>17</sup>God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

- 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!
- C** **How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!**
- L** For from him and through him and to him are all things.
- C** **To him be glory forever. Amen.**

### Psalms 136:1–9

- L** <sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.
- C** <sup>2</sup>**Give thanks to the God of gods,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.**
- L** <sup>3</sup>Give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- C** <sup>4</sup>**to him who alone does great wonders,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;**

- L** <sup>5</sup>to him who by understanding made the heavens,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- C** <sup>6</sup>**to him who spread out the earth above the waters,**  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**
- L** <sup>7</sup>to him who made the great lights,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- C** <sup>8</sup>**the sun to rule over the day,**  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**
- L** <sup>9</sup>the moon and stars to rule over the night,
- C** **for his steadfast love endures forever;**

### Ephesians 3:14–21

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup>that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

<sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

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

### Verse of the Day: Mark 6:50c

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Take heart; Alleluia.
- C** **Alleluia, Alleluia. It is I. Do not be afraid. Alleluia.**

### Mark 6:45–56

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter.
- C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>45</sup>Immediately [Jesus] made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>46</sup>And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>47</sup>And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. <sup>48</sup>And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, <sup>49</sup>but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, <sup>50</sup>for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” <sup>51</sup>And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, <sup>52</sup>for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

<sup>53</sup>When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. <sup>54</sup>And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him <sup>55</sup>and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup>And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

**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.

**I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus** Lutheran Service Book 729, Lutheran Worship 408, The Lutheran Hymnal 428



1 I am trust-ing Thee, Lord Je - sus, Trust - ing on - ly Thee;  
2 I am trust-ing Thee for par - don; At Thy feet I bow,  
3 I am trust-ing Thee for cleans - ing In the crim - son flood;  
4 I am trust-ing Thee to guide me; Thou a - lone shalt lead,



Trust - ing Thee for full sal - va - tion, Great and free.  
For Thy grace and ten - der mer - cy Trust - ing now.  
Trust - ing Thee to make me ho - ly By Thy blood.  
Ev - 'ry day and hour sup - ply - ing All my need.

5 I am trusting Thee for power;  
Thine can never fail.  
Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me  
Must prevail.

6 I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus;  
Never let me fall.  
I am trusting Thee forever  
And for all.

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## Devotional Thoughts:

Sometime in about 1951, a little green five-horsepower Johnson Seahorse outboard motor was born. I'm not sure what it did or where it was for the first few years of its life. However, our fates were joined together when we were both roughly ten years old.

My family was visiting our relatives at their cabin on Manistee Lake near Kalkaska, Michigan. My cousins, Dick and Alan, decided to take me out on the lake for a boat ride. I looked up to my older cousins as wise and accomplished outdoorsmen. In retrospect, I realize the inadequacy of that assessment and wonder why my parents were so foolish as to let me go with them.

As we walked to the dock with joyful anticipation of a day on the lake, I spotted that little green Seahorse firmly fastened to a small boat with three seats. Dick sat in the stern to serve as captain and engineer. Now my

memory is a little hazy at this point but knowing Dick and Alan, I was assigned the seat in the front so I could have a better view and so that the waves would splash over the bow and soak me to the skin. And it was wavy.

We had a wonderful time with that little Seahorse and that little boat. Dick skillfully maneuvered our modest craft so the waves would splash to their greatest height and into the boat. We all laughed. As I recall, Dick and Alan laughed a little more than I did.

Then the little green Seahorse sputtered and fell silent. The waves weren't splashing over the bow anymore. We were now sideways to the wind and viciously rocking back and forth. The laughter was gone. Dick struggled with the controls and starter rope on the little Seahorse but it wouldn't even pop.

Dick and Alan seemed to be frightened. I heard it in their voices each time the rope was pulled and the little Seahorse refused to start. Blissfully unaware of the danger we were in, I noted that the wind was blowing in the direction we wanted to travel. I helpfully suggested that we allow the wind to blow us to shore. To my surprise, my normally calm and sophisticated cousin, Dick, yelled, "NO, WE WILL BE DASHED AGAINST THE ROCKS!" Sixty years later, the panic in his voice and his yell still send shivers up my spine. Even at my tender age, I knew that I didn't want to be "dashed against the rocks."

I have spent many hours in boats since that day. Sometimes I was in situations much less pleasant than that time on Manistee Lake. But I have never experienced more panic than I saw and heard in my cousin on that day. That vivid memory came to mind as I thought of the disciples at the oars of their boat on the Sea of Galilee so many years ago.

According to historians, their boat was about 27 feet long. It could be sailed or rowed. But on that night the sail was down because the wind was against them.

It had been a long day. They were on their second boat trip. The objective of the first voyage was to find a place away from the crowds so that they could rest. Instead, people thronged to their landing place.

Jesus had compassion for the multitude because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Although they hadn't had time to eat, Jesus spent the day teaching those hungry souls. Soon their bodies were hungry, too. Aware of their need, Jesus multiplied five loaves and two fish so that they were sufficient to feed five thousand with twelve basketsful of leftovers!

Now, some rest was imperative. Jesus dismissed the crowds and sent the disciples away in a boat while He went up on the mountain to pray.

I believe that the disciples expected a leisurely cruise. It was probably a pleasant evening with a gentle breeze. After hoisting the sail, they could anticipate a relaxing journey listening to seagulls and enjoying the setting sun. Things were about to change.

When they were far from shore, a vicious storm fell upon them. The Sea of Galilee is 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. The surface of the lake is 700 feet below sea level. On the eastern shore is located the Golan Heights that rise 9,000 feet above sea level. Late at night, a wind flow develops from the land towards the lake. It is not uncommon for that wind to combine with winds that blow down the steep slopes surrounding the Sea of Galilee. This can be a formula for disaster.

Mark reports that the wind was against them. It was crucial for them to keep the bow facing into the waves to avoid swamping the boat. No account of their words is given but we can imagine the panic in their voices as the experienced sailors gave directions to a tax collector and other untrained disciples.

The ESV says that they were making headway painfully. The Greek word translated "painfully" literally means "to torture." They were tortured at their oars. This was a life-and-death situation. Their hands must have been raw. As one disciple dropped in exhaustion another took his place. Yet sometime after 3 am, they were still a long way from shore.

In the middle of this disaster in the making, Jesus comes to their aid walking on the water. Seeing Jesus, they immediately conclude that He is a ghost and their panic turns to terror. Overwhelming fear captivates them all.

Above the howling wind and the crashing waves, Jesus spoke these calming words to them, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased.

On that day sixty years ago, when I heard the panic in Dick's voice, I must have offered a silent prayer. A few moments later, the little green Seahorse sprung to life and we were saved from being dashed on the rocks.

There are many lessons to learn from this account of Jesus walking on the water, not the least of which is His divinity. Jesus is no ordinary man. He is the Son of God. He multiplies loaves and fish. He walks on water. He

calms the sea. These are things that only God can do. The God of creation controls the wind and waves. So we must conclude that Jesus is indeed God!

However, this lesson is mostly about our human frailty, our fear, and our lack of faith. Mark ends this account with these words. “They were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.”

After seeing all that Jesus had done, they still did not understand. We are so much like the disciples. Every day we see what God does for us. But when a little green Seahorse stops running, we panic!

It is easy for me to have faith when the sea is calm and a gentle breeze fill my sails. You may feel the same way. The real test comes when the wind is against us and we are straining at the oars. Thanks be to God, this is precisely when Jesus comes to us with His calming voice, “Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid.”

The disciples struggled through the night into the fourth watch. It took some time before Jesus came. It is true that Jesus may not calm the waves in our lives right away. But His promise is a safe harbor in paradise.

Our Church Year began with these words from an angel to the shepherds, “**Fear not**, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

A few weeks ago we heard Jesus say to Jairus, “**Do not fear**, only believe” (Mark 5:36). In Luke 12:4, we read, “I tell you, my friends, **do not fear** those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. In fact, just a few verses later in verse 7, Jesus says, “Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. **Fear not**; you are of more value than many sparrows.” Again in Luke 12, we read, “**Fear not**, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). Finally, every Easter we go with the women to the empty tomb and hear the angel say, “**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).

Jesus does not want us to live in fear. However, often like the disciples, our hearts are covered over with a callus of unbelief. Faith seems to be fleeting just when we need it the most. The answer to a faltering faith is the means of grace. Jesus still comes to us today through word and sacrament.

We worship weekly to bolster our faith and diminish our unbelief. The Holy Spirit gives courage and strength to our hearts when we hear again of Jesus’ love and His sacrifice for sinners.

The Apostle Paul was not in the boat that day. It would be a few years before he would meet Jesus on the road to Damascus. But He was fully aware of the comfort and peace that Jesus brings to troubled and fearing hearts. He was beaten and imprisoned in Philippi. (Acts 16). He was stoned and left for dead in Lystra (Acts 14:19). Yet he knows that “for those who love God all things work together for good” (Romans 8:28).

God always hears our prayers. And contrary to what the disciples believed as they were being tossed to and fro in their boat, He is able to “do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20).

God has given us the privilege of knowing the calm and peace that comes from Jesus. He has given us the privilege of passing it on from one generation to the next. May God grant success to this most important task.

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

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

**L** Great are You, O Lord, and greatly to be praised. You rule earth and sea and sky. We give You thanks for the blessings of creation and life that come from Your abundant goodness. Give to Your people boldness to speak of Your awesome deeds and sing always of Your righteousness.

**C Amen.**

**L** Lord, You are able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think. Ground us in love, give us a faith rooted in the promises of Christ, and give us strength to comprehend and know His love that surpasses knowledge.

**C Amen.**

**L** We give thanks to You, Lord, that You calm the daily turmoil of life. Grant us such faith that we would take heart and not be afraid.

**C** Amen.

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

**C** Amen.

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

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

**L** Let us bless the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

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

**C** Amen.

**Beautiful Savior** Lutheran Service Book 537, Lutheran Worship 657, The Lutheran Hymnal 507



1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion, Son of  
2 Fair are the mead - ows, Fair are the wood - lands, Robed in  
3 Fair is the sun - shine, Fair is the moon - light, Bright the  
4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions, Son of



God and Son of Man! Tru - ly I'd love Thee, Tru - ly I'd  
flow'rs of bloom - ing spring; Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is  
spar - kling stars on high; Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines  
God and Son of Man! Glo - ry and hon - or, Praise, ad - o -



serve Thee, Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.  
pur - er, He makes our sor - r'wing spir - it sing.  
pur - er Than all the an - gels in the sky.  
ra - tion Now and for - ev - er - more be Thine!



**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 Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

#### July 26 – July 31, 2021

#### Introduction

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

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

#### Monday

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

**C** Amen.

**Introit Psalm 145:1–3, 6–7; antiphon Psalm 145:5**

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

**C** I will extol you, my God and King,  
and bless your name forever and ever.

**L** Every day I will bless you  
and praise your name forever and ever.

**C** Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,  
and his greatness is unsearchable.

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

**C** They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness  
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

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

#### 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.

As is often the case, the introit this week is a small portion of a larger psalm. Psalm 145 spotlights the greatness of God.

When we read the psalm, the statements of God's greatness are clearly evident to His faithful people. We see His wondrous works in creation. We see His awesome deeds in the daily blessings that we receive from His hand. He gives us our food in due season. He opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing.

But God's greatness is found in much more than these things. His greatness is found in His grace and mercy. Psalm 145:8-9 tells us:

- <sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
<sup>9</sup> The LORD is good to all,  
and his mercy is over all that he has made.

**L** Let us pray. Lord God, heavenly Father, we extol You for all of the wonderful works. We are especially thankful for Your greatest work of all, the grace and mercy You have shown to us through our savior, through the same 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 of the Day: Mark 6:50c

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Take heart; Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. It is I. Do not be afraid. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

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

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

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

**L** Let us pray: Almighty and most merciful God, the protector of all who trust in You, strengthen our faith and give us courage to believe that in Your love You will rescue us from all adversities; 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 Collect of the Day offers great insight into the truths being proclaimed in the lessons of the day. All three lessons, the introit, and the psalm remind us that God is both almighty and merciful. The God of creation controls the wind and the waves. His great mercy was evident to Noah and to the disciples in the boat. His mercy was known by the Apostle Paul and to each of us today.

God's protection rests upon all who put their trust in Him. Unfortunately, in his day, Noah and his family were the only ones who trusted the Lord. Everyone else had rejected God and His protecting hand!

The disciples in the boat only had a weak faith but Jesus still came and saved them from their plight. We, too, have times of weak faith. It is then when we offer the prayer, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

God graciously answers our prayers for a stronger faith by giving us the Holy Spirit through His word and sacraments. By His grace, we receive the courage to believe that God's love rescues us from the adversities of life.

These adversities come to everyone. For some, they mean defeat and despair. For us, they can be a great burden but we know that the ultimate victory is ours in Jesus who defeated sin, death, and the devil for us and opens to us the kingdom of heaven (1 Corinthians 15:57, But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.)

Let us pray: Almighty and most merciful God, the protector of all who trust in You, strengthen our faith and give us courage to believe that in Your love You will rescue us from all adversities; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## Wednesday

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

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Mark 6:50c

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Take heart; Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. It is I. Do not be afraid. Alleluia.

## Psalm 136:1–9

**L** <sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.

**C** <sup>2</sup>**Give thanks to the God of gods,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.**

**L** <sup>3</sup>Give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;

**C** <sup>4</sup>**to him who alone does great wonders,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;**

**L** <sup>5</sup>to him who by understanding made the heavens,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;

**C** <sup>6</sup>**to him who spread out the earth above the waters,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;**

**L** <sup>7</sup>to him who made the great lights,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;

**C** <sup>8</sup>**the sun to rule over the day,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;**

**L** <sup>9</sup>the moon and stars to rule over the night,  
**C** **for his steadfast love endures forever;**

## 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.

Come, Lord Jesus  
Be our guest  
And let these gifts  
To us be blest. Amen.

If you have had dinner with me, my family, or most Lutherans that I know, these words are familiar to you. It is known as the common table prayer and is probably the best-known mealtime prayer among North American Lutherans.

However, if you had dinner with my mother, you know that she would always conclude her prayer with Psalm 136:1,

“O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endures (th) forever” (KJV).

There are 26 verses in Psalm 136 and the refrain, “for his mercy endureth forever” is found in each verse! Remembering these words was important for God’s people of the Old Testament and it is important for God’s people today.

The word translated as “mercy” in the King James Version of the Bible is translated as “steadfast love” in the ESV and RSV. It is translated as “love” in the NIV. For the curious, it is translated as “misericordia” (compassion) in the Latin Vulgate. Clearly, a lot is happening in this little Hebrew word “*chesed*” that each of these translations tries to capture.

Martin Luther says this about “*chesed*.”

The Hebrew word מְרֻמֵּן, which was ἐλεημοσύνη to the Greeks and until now “mercy” to the Germans, I translated as “steadfast love”; for it really means “**goodness in action.**” Christ Himself uses the word when He says (Matt. 12:7): “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.” And St. Paul tells Timothy (1 Tim. 6:2) that servants should gladly serve believing masters, for they receive the benefit. In Matt. 6:1 Christ says: “Beware of practicing your piety.” This is what we call “alms,” from the Greek ἐλεημοσύνη. Although the word “alms” came to be used incorrectly when referring to a piece of bread for the beggar at our door, it really means ἐλεημοσύνη מְרֻמֵּן, “**goodness in action,**” **such as God grants us and we, in turn, should show toward others.** (Emphasis added – Luther’s Works, American Edition, Vol. 14, Page 50.)

Our every cry to God for mercy is answered by this little refrain in Psalm 136: His mercy (steadfast love, compassion, *chesed*) endures forever! It is found in every act of mercy or kindness received or given. It is ultimately found in the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation won for us by Jesus on the cross.

Prayer: “O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endures forever.” Amen.

## Thursday

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

## Verse of the Day: Mark 6:50c

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Take heart; Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. It is I. Do not be afraid. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

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

## Genesis 9:8–17

<sup>8</sup>God said to Noah and to his sons with him, <sup>9</sup>“Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. <sup>11</sup>I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” <sup>12</sup>And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: <sup>13</sup>I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” <sup>17</sup>God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

How good are you at negotiating? This is a skill that I do not possess.

Apparently, some people enjoy negotiating. There is a second-hand store in Lansing, Michigan called Dicker and Deal. I was there years ago purchasing some hard-to-find lenses for my 35mm camera. I was surprised when I found them and happy with the price. At the cash register, I discovered that the price printed on the lenses was only intended to be an opening for our negotiations! I was happy to pay a little less but that’s not my style.

Contracts and prices are commonly negotiated in our society. In some parts of the world, it seems that everything is negotiated. However, there are times when negotiation is totally out of the question.

It would be foolish to negotiate with firefighters before they battle a fire in your home. It would be unwise to negotiate with first responders before they are willing to initiate CPR.

However, it is not just foolish and unwise to negotiate with God, it is impossible. He establishes the terms of his covenant and we live within them.

I once talked with a gentleman who was in much distress about his life. I could tell that he was despondent and distraught. I explained to him the free gift of salvation through faith in Jesus. In response, he told me, “That’s not how it works. You need to make a deal with God. You tell Him what you want and what you will do for Him if He gives it to you!”

My guess is that many people have that idea about negotiating with God. God’s covenant with Noah is evidence that we don’t negotiate with God. Noah and his family offered nothing to God for His promise! God simply established His covenant and sealed it with the rainbow.

God also established a greater covenant in the cross of Christ. There, Jesus redeemed the world and opened the kingdom of heaven to all. He simply calls upon us to receive this precious gift. The Apostle Paul’s words to the jailer at Philippi are true for us today, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). This is God’s covenant of grace.

Prayer: Shed Your Holy Spirit upon us, O Lord, and make ready our hearts to believe Your promise of eternal life and receive the salvation won for us by Jesus. Amen.

## Friday

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

### Verse of the Day: Mark 6:50c

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Take heart; Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. It is I. Do not be afraid. Alleluia.

### Kyrie

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

### Ephesians 3:14–21

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup>that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

<sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

These verses from Ephesians show the essence of the Apostle Paul’s ministry. He has these three goals: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith,” that you would “know the love of Christ,” and “that you may be filled with all the fullness of God!”

Churches do many things. They are engaged in a variety of worthwhile ministries. However, we must never forget that the main purpose of the Church is proclaiming the love of God in Christ so that Christ would dwell in the hearts of people through faith. Everything else must take second place to this overarching goal.

Seminars on finance, parenting, or managing grief are all valuable ministries. But we must never let them dominate so that we forget our mission of making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us (Matthew 28:18-20).

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.

## Saturday

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

### Gradual Romans 11:33, 36

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

### Verse of the Day: Mark 6:50c

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Take heart; Alleluia.  
**C** **Alleluia, Alleluia. It is I. Do not be afraid. Alleluia.**

## Kyrie

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

### Ephesians 3:20–21

<sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer is a shared experience among Christians. All Christians in every denomination pray. Some of our prayers are well composed and developed with much thought and reflection. Others are dashed off on the fly. Some use large words and sophisticated language. Others are offered with a stammering voice or garbled grammar.

No matter how our prayers are composed or offered, it is important to remember that God is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think. Cast all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7).

Prayer: Almighty and everlasting God, receive the prayers that we bring before You and answer them according to Your will and promises. Grant us the faith to know that you can do far more than we ask or even think to be possible, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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