

# The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

## August 17, 2025

### Come, Thou Almighty King

Lutheran Service Book 905, Lutheran Worship 169, The Lutheran Hymnal 239



1 Come, Thou al - might - y King, Help us Thy  
2 Come, Thou in - car - nate Word, Gird on Thy  
3 Come, ho - ly Com - fort - er, Thy sa - cred  
4 To Thee, great One in Three, E - ter - nal



name to sing; Help us to praise; Fa - ther all -  
might - y sword; Our prayer at - tend. Come and Thy  
wit - ness bear In this glad hour! Thou, who al -  
prais - es be Hence ev - er - more! Thy sov - 'reign



glo - ri - ous, O'er all vic - to - ri - ous,  
peo - ple bless, And give Thy Word suc - cess,  
might - y art, Now rule in ev - 'ry heart,  
maj - es - ty May we in glo - ry see,



Come and reign o - ver us, An - cient of Days.  
And let Thy righ - teous - ness On us de - scend.  
And ne'er from us de - part, Spir - it of pow'r.  
And to e - ter - ni - ty Love and a - dore.

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**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 55:1, 12–14, 16; antiphon Psalm 55:22**

**L** Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you;  
he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

**C** **Give ear to my prayer, O God,  
and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!**

**L** For it is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could bear it;  
it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him.

**C** **But it is you, a man, my equal,  
my companion, my familiar friend.**

**L** We used to take sweet counsel together;  
within God's house we walked in the throng.

**C** **But I call to God,  
and the Lord will save me.**

**C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**L** Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you;  
he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

### **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: Merciful Lord, cleanse and defend Your Church by the sacrifice of Christ. United with Him in Holy Baptism, give us grace to receive with thanksgiving the fruits of His redeeming work and daily follow in His way; 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.

## Jeremiah 23:16–29

<sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>17</sup>They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, ‘It shall be well with you’; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, ‘No disaster shall come upon you.’”

<sup>18</sup>For who among them has stood in the council of the LORD  
to see and to hear his word,  
or who has paid attention to his word and listened?

<sup>19</sup>Behold, the storm of the LORD!  
Wrath has gone forth,  
a whirling tempest;  
it will burst upon the head of the wicked.

<sup>20</sup>The anger of the LORD will not turn back  
until he has executed and accomplished  
the intents of his heart.  
In the latter days you will understand it clearly.

<sup>21</sup>“I did not send the prophets,  
yet they ran;  
I did not speak to them,  
yet they prophesied.

<sup>22</sup>But if they had stood in my council,  
then they would have proclaimed my words to my people,  
and they would have turned them from their evil way,  
and from the evil of their deeds.

<sup>23</sup>“Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God afar off? <sup>24</sup>Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. <sup>25</sup>I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ <sup>26</sup>How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, <sup>27</sup>who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? <sup>28</sup>Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. <sup>29</sup>Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”

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

## Gradual Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

- L** Fear the Lord, you his saints,
- C** for those who fear him lack nothing!

- L** Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
- C** but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

## Psalm 119:81–88

- L** <sup>81</sup>My soul longs for your salvation; I hope in your word.
- C** <sup>82</sup>**My eyes long for your promise; I ask, “When will you comfort me?”**
- L** <sup>83</sup>For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, yet I have not forgotten your statutes.
- C** <sup>84</sup>**How long must your servant endure? When will you judge those who persecute me?**
- L** <sup>85</sup>The insolent have dug pitfalls for me; they do not live according to your law.
- C** <sup>86</sup>**All your commandments are sure; they persecute me with falsehood; help me!**
- L** <sup>87</sup>They have almost made an end of me on earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts.
- C** <sup>88</sup>**In your steadfast love give me life, that I may keep the testimonies of your mouth.**

## Hebrews 11:17–31, 12:1–3

<sup>17</sup>By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, <sup>18</sup>of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” <sup>19</sup>He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. <sup>20</sup>By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. <sup>21</sup>By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. <sup>22</sup>By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

<sup>23</sup>By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict. <sup>24</sup>By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, <sup>25</sup>choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup>He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. <sup>27</sup>By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup>By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

<sup>29</sup>By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. <sup>30</sup>By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. <sup>31</sup>By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

<sup>12:1</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

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

## Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 23:29a, 28b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD? Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. What has straw in common with wheat? Alleluia.

## Luke 12: 49–53

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter.
- C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>49</sup>[Jesus said:] “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup>I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! <sup>51</sup>Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. <sup>52</sup>For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. <sup>53</sup>They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

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

**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

## The Apostles' Creed

**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

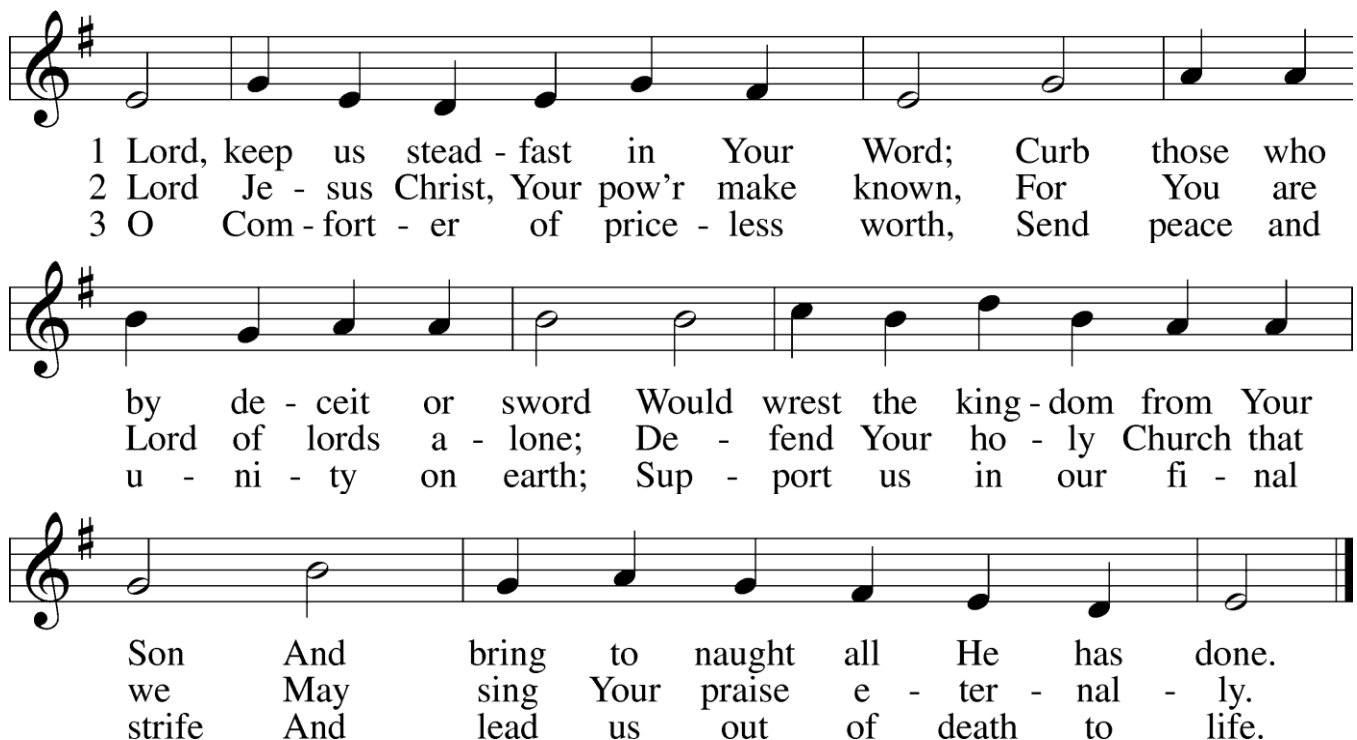
and sits at the right hand of God the Father  
Almighty.

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

## 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.

## Devotional thoughts:

Isaiah prophesied that when the Savior was born, He would be known as the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). After the angel announced Jesus’ birth to the shepherds, a multitude of the heavenly host appeared praising God and saying, “Peace on earth, goodwill toward men” (Luke 2:14). So it can be disconcerting to hear Jesus say, “Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.” There must be more to this story. Indeed, there is.

Jesus came to establish peace between God and humanity. He did that by His suffering and death on the cross. However, when we are translated from the kingdom of this world into God’s kingdom of grace, the old evil foe continues to fight against us. He does this with the aid of the sinful world. When we are faithful to Jesus his operatives will seek to destroy us by taking our life, goods, fame, child, and spouse. It is particularly difficult, devastating, and hurtful when he uses our family and friends to battle against our faith in Jesus. You may have experienced this yourself.

In the early days of the Church and in various parts of the world today, these satanic attacks against Christians take on the form of martyrdom. In about the year 200, there was a young well-educated noblewoman named Perpetua. She was about twenty-two years old and recently married when she became a Christian. She also was a nursing mother when she was imprisoned for her faith in Christ. We know of her struggles because she kept a diary of her imprisonment.

Her faith brought her into conflict with her father who was a pagan. He begged her to renounce her faith. She ultimately refused and was executed in the arena for being a Christian.

Fortunately, few of us face such trials by fire for our faith. Yet Jesus’ prediction has proven true. It is not uncommon for faith in Him to divide families.

I once knew a young woman who told me that her parents disowned her because she had been confirmed in the Lutheran Church. I met a man whose father considered him dead because he came to faith in Christ. In a real sense, peace with God means conflict with the world.

I don’t know if you have been persecuted or ridiculed for your faith. I would not be surprised if you were. It seems like it is impossible to avoid conflict with the unbelieving world.

What are we to do? First, be forewarned. Jesus spoke these words to keep us alert to the opposition we all face.

Second, trust God to care for you and protect you even when the world seems filled with devils eager to devour us. Remember “One little word can fell” them.

Third, speak graciously to unbelievers. God may use you as an instrument to bring them to faith. Remember these words of the Apostle Paul, “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” (Colossians 4:5-6).

Some years ago, an older woman in my congregation asked me to visit her brother who was dying of cancer. When I called, he agreed to let me visit him.

After a short time in his home, he seemed to be going out of his way to use foul and profane language. I began to think that he was intentionally trying to offend me and discourage me from sharing the message of salvation through faith in Jesus. Nevertheless, I continued undaunted and concluded by asking for permission to pray for him. He agreed. Then I asked if I could come back and visit him again. To my surprise, he said, “Yes.”

I was able to visit him several more times. I soon became convinced that the Holy Spirit had softened his heart and brought him to faith. I counted it a privilege to officiate his Christian funeral. The Prince of Peace had entered his heart. I anticipate seeing him in heaven someday.

It is disappointing to face opposition in the world because of our faith. Nevertheless, Jesus asks us to pray for our enemies and those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44). The best way to pray for our enemies is to pray for their conversion. When they come to faith, you will have peace with your new brothers and sisters in Christ.

“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.

## Prayers

**L** Gracious God, our fathers in the faith gave a good confession of Your truth before the powers of this world. In the spirit of Jeremiah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, strengthen our faith in our day to confess the truth of Your word with what we say and do.

**C** Amen.

**L** Lord God, faith in Jesus can cause division in our families and nation. Move us to treasure the faith granted to us in our Baptism and the fellowship of believers more than other relationships in this world. We fervently pray for the salvation of those we know and love who do not yet believe in our savior. Grant that the Gospel would touch the hearts of those who reject Your love.

**C** Amen.

**L** Lord God, You called Jeremiah as a youth and used Him in Your service. We give You thanks for the young Christians You have made Your children. By Your Word, strengthen them for daily life, and help them to grow as Your people. Keep them and all youth in Your care.

**C** Amen.

**L** Almighty God, You shepherd the nations according to Your Word. Grant our rulers wisdom and faith to serve for the good of their people and to promote peace and quietness for the flourishing of every godly endeavor. Protect those in harm's way because of the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East that cause innocent men, women, and children to suffer. Curb what is evil and promote what is good among us wherever we live in this fallen world.

**C** Amen.

**L** Visit us in Your compassion, O Lord. Deliver the sick from their infirmity, the troubled from their afflictions, the grieving from their sorrow, and the dying from their fear. May all who cry to You receive grace according to Your will. Help each of us to bear our crosses with patience and grace.

**C** Amen.

**L** Almighty Father, Your dear Son suffered and died for our salvation. Embolden us by the witness of that great company of saints who remained faithful unto death that we would likewise fix our eyes on Jesus and so share in His victory over the grave; 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.

**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.

## Fight the Good Fight

Lutheran Service Book 664, Lutheran Worship 299, The Lutheran Hymnal 447



1 Fight the good fight with all your might; Christ is your  
2 Run the straight race through God's good grace; Lift up your  
3 Cast care a - side, lean on your guide; His bound - less  
4 Faint not nor fear, His arms are near; He chang - es



strength, and Christ your right. Lay hold on life, and  
eyes, and seek His face. Life with its way be -  
mer - cy will pro - vide. Trust, and en - dur - ing  
not who holds you dear; On - ly be - lieve, and



it shall be Your joy and crown e - ter - nal - ly.  
fore us lies; Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.  
faith shall prove Christ is your life and Christ your love.  
you will see That Christ is all e - ter - nal - ly.

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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 TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST August 18—23, 2025

### 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 meditate on what God has done for you.

### Monday

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

### Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 23:29a, 28b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD? Alleluia.  
**G** Alleluia, Alleluia. What has straw in common with wheat? Alleluia.

### Introit Psalm 55:1, 12–14, 16; antiphon Psalm 55:22

- L** Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you;  
he will never permit the righteous to be moved.  
**G** Give ear to my prayer, O God,  
and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!  
**L** For it is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could bear it;  
it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him.  
**G** But it is you, a man, my equal,  
my companion, my familiar friend.  
**L** We used to take sweet counsel together;  
within God's house we walked in the throng.  
**G** But I call to God,  
and the Lord will save me.  
**G** 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** Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you;  
he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

## 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> |

Have you ever experienced betrayal by a close friend? This is one of the most hurtful things to live through. It is the subject of Psalm 55 and our introit for this week. David rightfully recognized that it would be easier to deal with taunting from an enemy or an adversary who is rude and disrespectful.

In some ways, life could be described as either living in danger or safety. It always feels good to get home after a trip. Traveling on the highway, going through airports, or living in a strange place produces an underlying feeling of danger and peril. Relaxing in the safety of my home always produces a sense of relief. I can let my guard down.

People can be described the same way. Some of them can be dangerous. Others can give you a sense of safety and security. You trust your friends. You share your secrets and innermost feelings with them because they make you feel safe. It is extremely disappointing to discover that sometimes trust is misplaced and used to hurt you emotionally, financially, or physically. Such is the subject of Psalm 55. What are we to do in the face of such traitorous treachery?

When something like this happens to you, there is only one place to turn. Turn to the Lord. Cast your burden upon Him. He will sustain you. He is the only one we can truly trust. He is the only one who offers us complete safety in our dangerous, sinful world.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for being with me even when close friends betray me. Grant me comfort and safety in your loving arms in times of distress and jeopardy through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

## Tuesday

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|----------|--|
| <b>L</b> | In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. |
| <b>C</b> | <b>Amen.</b>   |

### Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 23:29a, 28b

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>L</b> | Alleluia, Alleluia. Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD? Alleluia. |
| <b>C</b> | <b>Alleluia, Alleluia. What has straw in common with wheat? Alleluia.</b>  |

## 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> |

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>L</b> | Let us pray: Merciful Lord, cleanse and defend Your Church by the sacrifice of Christ. United with Him in Holy Baptism, give us grace to receive with thanksgiving the fruits of His redeeming work and daily follow in His way; 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.**

There are a variety of ways that the following story has been told. This is the way I first heard it. The American pioneer and frontiersman, Daniel Boone, was well known for his wilderness survival skills. The story

goes that someone once asked him if he'd ever been lost. He answered, "I have never been lost but I was a mite bewildered once for three days."

I have to say that I was a "mite bewildered" by our collect for this week. Let me explain. As I tried to fathom exactly what we are praying for and why, I found myself on a journey of discovery.

I first did some internet research and discovered that this collect seems to be unique to the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. But I didn't stop there.

You may know that many parts of the liturgies found in Lutheran Service Book and Lutheran Worship are borrowed from the Anglican Church. So I searched the Book of Common Prayer for our collect. It wasn't there. However, it does seem that the author of our collect combined ideas from collects from last week and this week found in the Book of Common Prayer.

Prior to the publishing of Lutheran Service Book, we only had one year of collects that were repeated annually even though we had a three-year series of readings. With Lutheran Service Book the historic collects were supplemented with two more years. So I'm not surprised that our collect for this week is unique to the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Here is the phrase that had me a "mite bewildered." "Cleanse and defend Your Church by the sacrifice of Christ." I'm not 100% sure what that means. The Anglican collect says this, "Let your continual mercy, O Lord, cleanse and defend your Church" (Proper 13, page 232, Contemporary Collects.)

How exactly does the "sacrifice of Christ" cleanse and defend the Church? We are certainly cleansed by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. Our sins are forgiven and we are declared holy and pure in the sight of God.

But what about "defend." Then it came to me. I'm not sure that this is what the author intended but this is what ended my bewilderment.

In Luther's great reformation hymn, "A Mighty Fortress," he declares, "One little word can fell him." Which word is this? The most common answer is Jesus. But Luther scholars have suggested that the word Luther was thinking of was one spoken by Jesus from the cross, "*tetelestai*." Although it is just one word in Greek, it is translated as a three-word sentence in English, "It is finished." This was a dear concept for Martin Luther.

In his early life, he often felt that no matter how good he tried to be, it never was enough. He was sure to be damned for his imperfections. But he came to love this beautiful word, "*tetelestai*," "It is finished." By it, he was convinced that Jesus had finished the work of salvation on the cross and there is nothing that we need to do to add to it.

Every time Satan would confront him with his sin, Luther was comforted by the fact that Jesus had declared from the cross, "It is finished." In this way, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross defended him from despair. In the same way, it defends each one of us and the entire Christian Church.

Let us pray: Merciful Lord, cleanse and defend Your Church by the sacrifice of Christ. United with Him in Holy Baptism, give us grace to receive with thanksgiving the fruits of His redeeming work and daily follow in His way; through the same 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: Jeremiah 23:29a, 28b

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD? Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. What has straw in common with wheat? Alleluia.

## Psalm 119:81–88

- L** <sup>81</sup>My soul longs for your salvation; I hope in your word.  
**C** <sup>82</sup>**My eyes long for your promise; I ask, “When will you comfort me?”**  
**L** <sup>83</sup>For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, yet I have not forgotten your statutes.  
**C** <sup>84</sup>**How long must your servant endure? When will you judge those who persecute me?**  
**L** <sup>85</sup>The insolent have dug pitfalls for me; they do not live according to your law.  
**C** <sup>86</sup>**All your commandments are sure; they persecute me with falsehood; help me!**  
**L** <sup>87</sup>They have almost made an end of me on earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts.  
**C** <sup>88</sup>**In your steadfast love give me life, that I may keep the testimonies of your mouth.**

## 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. |

Our lessons for this week center on the fact that, as God’s people, we are often attacked for our faith by the sinful world. These verses from Psalm 119 continue with this theme.

Like each of us, the psalmist longs for salvation. His desire is not only for eternal salvation but he also longs to be rescued from earthly attacks.

He uses this interesting turn of phrase, “I have become like a wineskin in the smoke.” I don’t think I’ve ever seen a wineskin in person. I definitely have never seen “a wineskin in the smoke.” I am so pampered.

According to commentators, this phrase refers to wineskins stored in the cross beams of the ceiling. When fires are set in the hearth, smoke rises to the ceiling. It darkens and dries wineskins that have been neglected and stored too long under the rafters.

The psalmist feels neglected by God. He is suffering. He is persecuted. His enemies are trying to trap him. But he still hopes in the Lord.

Although I’m not exactly sure how “a wineskin in the smoke” feels, I’m pretty sure that I have felt like the psalmist. In those times, like the psalmist, I need to continue to be faithful to God and put my hope in His word. At the right time and in the right way, He will send comfort.

God sometimes comforts you by sending a friend to listen to your complaints and share God’s word with you. Other times, God sends you to comfort others when they feel like “wineskins in the smoke.”

Let us pray: O Lord, send Your salvation to me. Let me continue to hope in Your word. Send me Your comfort in Christ. Allow me to bring the comfort of Christ to people in need. Amen.

## Thursday

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

## Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 23:29a, 28b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD? Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. What has straw in common with wheat? 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. |

## Jeremiah 23:16–29

<sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>17</sup>They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, ‘It shall be well with you’; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, ‘No disaster shall come upon you.’”

<sup>18</sup>For who among them has stood in the council of the LORD  
to see and to hear his word,  
or who has paid attention to his word and listened?

<sup>19</sup>Behold, the storm of the LORD!  
Wrath has gone forth,  
a whirling tempest;  
it will burst upon the head of the wicked.

<sup>20</sup>The anger of the LORD will not turn back  
until he has executed and accomplished  
the intents of his heart.  
In the latter days you will understand it clearly.

<sup>21</sup>“I did not send the prophets,  
yet they ran;  
I did not speak to them,  
yet they prophesied.

<sup>22</sup>But if they had stood in my council,  
then they would have proclaimed my words to my people,  
and they would have turned them from their evil way,  
and from the evil of their deeds.

<sup>23</sup>“Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God afar off? <sup>24</sup>Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. <sup>25</sup>I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ <sup>26</sup>How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, <sup>27</sup>who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? <sup>28</sup>Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. <sup>29</sup>Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”

Jeremiah faced the perpetual problem of the apostles and prophets. The pure word of God was opposed by false prophets and false apostles.

The problem persists to this very day. Sometimes it is obvious such as when leaders of cults claim to speak for God. Other times it is more subtle such as when pastors or ministers assert special privilege because God is speaking to them through prayer.

From the beginning, the truth of God’s word has been challenged. In the Garden of Eden, Satan asked Eve, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” (Genesis 3:1). Jesus quoted Isaiah to the Pharisees and scribes, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matthew 15:8-9). In Mark 7:8, He followed up that quote with this comment, “You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

We dare not let false prophets or preachers lead us away from the pure word of God. Visions, feelings, tradition, or human reason are not excuses for abandoning God’s word. Changing times and new ways of thinking are never sufficient to repeal God’s commands.

In Jeremiah's time, popular culture was against the truth of God's word of judgment. The same is often true today. We ought never to forget Jesus' words, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Mark 13:31).

Sin and grace remain the same. Jesus' work of salvation is for all people of all time. The writer of Hebrews said it well, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the gift of Your holy word. Grant that we would never be led astray. Keep us steadfast in Your word of truth that Jesus died and rose again so that by believing in Him we would have eternal life. Amen.

## Friday

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

## Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 23:29a, 28b

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD? Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. What has straw in common with wheat? 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.

## Hebrews 11:17–31, 12:1–3

<sup>17</sup>By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, <sup>18</sup>of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." <sup>19</sup>He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. <sup>20</sup>By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. <sup>21</sup>By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. <sup>22</sup>By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

<sup>23</sup>By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. <sup>24</sup>By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup>choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup>He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. <sup>27</sup>By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup>By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

<sup>29</sup>By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. <sup>30</sup>By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. <sup>31</sup>By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

<sup>12:1</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Our Epistle lesson from Hebrews completes chapter 11 and concludes with the first three verses of chapter 12. These three verses of chapter 12 explain why all the heroes of the Old Testament were listed in chapter 11.

They are the great cloud of witnesses who demonstrated to us how to live lives of faith. We learn from them the importance of endurance. Faith is able to look beyond the here and now and see the finish line of eternal life.

Each one of us has a race set before us. Just as each individual person of faith listed in chapter 11 faced unique challenges and overcame them by trusting God, we too confront our own distinctive trials. But the solution is always the same. It always is faith and trust in God and His promises.

The ultimate example of faith is Jesus. He endured unspeakable trials that culminated with His suffering and death on the cross. He did this for us. It was difficult beyond imagination but He endured it with joy because of His love for us.

The trials and crosses that we endure can also bring us joy when we face them with faith. We know that Jesus' cross brought us the ultimate blessing. By faith, we know that our temporary troubles will one day give way to the eternal joys of heaven.

Let us pray: O Lord, grant us the peace and joy of faith in the face of trials and crosses 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.

## Verse of the Day: Jeremiah 23:29a, 28b

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD? Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. What has straw in common with wheat? Alleluia.

## Gradual Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

**L** Fear the Lord, you his saints,

**C** for those who fear him lack nothing!

**L** Many are the afflictions of the righteous,

**C** but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

## 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.

## Jeremiah 23:28–29

<sup>28</sup>Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. <sup>29</sup>Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"

It's not common for the Verse of the Day to come from the Old Testament lesson. The creators of our propers must have found these verses to be exceptionally worthy of our consideration.

We have been reminded all week of the opposition that we face in the world. But in fact, it is God Himself that the world opposes. We are just His representatives at this time and place.

In Jeremiah's day, false prophets continuously contradicted God's word. They prophesied lies in God's name, saying, "I have dreamed, I have dreamed!" (Jeremiah 23:25). In the Verse of the Day and our reading for today, God says, "Go ahead. Tell your dream." He knows that it will come to nothing. The truth of God's word will always triumph. God's word is like fire. It will burn up all falsehood. It is like a hammer that will ultimately break counterfeit prophecies to pieces.

In the meantime, we are simply called to speak His word faithfully. We must not waver in clearly speaking the truth of God's law and the punishment we deserve because of our sin. Yet we are not speaking the whole truth until we also proclaim the love and forgiveness that is ours through Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross.

We must preach and teach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), both law and gospel. Otherwise, we are not faithfully speaking God's word.

Despite all opposition, God's word always accomplishes His purpose. It convicts us of sin and comforts us with the gospel. It brings sinners to repentance and makes them part of God's family. God says it this way in Isaiah 55:10-11:

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for revealing to us the truth of Your holy Word. Send Your Holy Spirit so that we will speak Your word faithfully for it to accomplish your purpose through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.