

# The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

## August 24, 2025

### O Worship the King

Lutheran Service Book 804, Lutheran Worship 458, The Lutheran Hymnal 17



1 O wor - ship the King, all - glo - rious a - bove.  
2 O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,  
3 This earth, with its store of won - ders un - told,  
4 Thy boun - ti - ful care what tongue can re - cite?



O grate - ful - ly sing His pow'r and His love;  
Whose robe is the light, whose can - o - py space;  
Al - might - y, Thy pow'r hath found - ed of old,  
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,



Our shield and de - fend - er, the An - cient of Days,  
His char - iots of wrath the deep thun - der - clouds form,  
Es - tab - lished it fast by a change - less de - cree,  
It streams from the hills, it de - scends to the plain,



Pa - vil - ioned in splen - dor and gird - ed with praise.  
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.  
And round it hath cast, like a man - tle, the sea.  
And sweet - ly dis - tills in the dew and the rain.

5 Frail children of dust  
and feeble as frail,  
In Thee do we trust,  
nor find Thee to fail.  
Thy mercies, how tender,  
how firm to the end,  
Our maker, defender,  
redeemer, and friend!

6 O measureless Might,  
ineffable Love,  
While angels delight  
to hymn Thee above,  
Thy humbler creation,  
though feeble their lays,  
With true adoration  
shall sing to Thy praise.

**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 117; antiphon Psalm 96:6a; 115:18

**L** Splendor and majesty are before him;  
we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the Lord!

**C** Praise the Lord, all nations!

Extol him, all peoples!

**L** For great is his steadfast love toward us,  
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!

**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** Splendor and majesty are before him;  
we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the Lord!

### Kyrie

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

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

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

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

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

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

**L** Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:

**C** Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

**L** Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.

**C** For You alone are the Holy One,  
You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

## Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: O Lord, You have called us to enter Your kingdom through the narrow door. Guide us by Your Word and Spirit, and lead us now and always into the feast of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

## Isaiah 66:18–23

<sup>18</sup>“For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, <sup>19</sup>and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. <sup>20</sup>And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. <sup>21</sup>And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.

<sup>22</sup>“For as the new heavens and the new earth  
that I make  
shall remain before me, says the LORD,  
so shall your offspring and your name remain.

<sup>23</sup>From new moon to new moon,  
and from Sabbath to Sabbath,  
all flesh shall come to worship before me,  
declares the LORD.”

- 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 50:1–15

- L** <sup>1</sup>The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.
- C** <sup>2</sup>**Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.**
- L** <sup>3</sup>Our God comes; he does not keep silence; before him is a devouring fire, around him a mighty tempest.
- C** <sup>4</sup>**He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people:**
- L** <sup>5</sup>“Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!”
- C** <sup>6</sup>**The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge!**
- L** <sup>7</sup>“Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God.
- C** <sup>8</sup>**Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me.**
- L** <sup>9</sup>I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds.
- C** <sup>10</sup>**For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.**
- L** <sup>11</sup>I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine.
- C** <sup>12</sup>**“If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine.**
- L** <sup>13</sup>Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?

- C** <sup>14</sup>**Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High,**  
**L** <sup>15</sup>and call upon me in the day of trouble;  
**C** **I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”**

## Hebrews 12:4–24

<sup>4</sup>In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>5</sup>And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,  
nor be weary when reproved by him.

<sup>6</sup>For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,  
and chastises every son whom he receives.”

<sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup>Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup>For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, <sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. <sup>14</sup>Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. <sup>15</sup>See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; <sup>16</sup>that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. <sup>17</sup>For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

<sup>18</sup>For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest <sup>19</sup>and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup>For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” <sup>21</sup>Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” <sup>22</sup>But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup>and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup>and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

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

## Verse of the Day: Luke 13:29

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. People will come from east and west, and from north and south, Alleluia.  
**C** **Alleluia, Alleluia. And recline at table in the kingdom of God. Alleluia.**

## Luke 13:22–30

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter.  
**C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>22</sup>[Jesus] went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup>And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, <sup>24</sup>“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. <sup>25</sup>When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open

to us,' then he will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' <sup>26</sup>Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' <sup>27</sup>But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!' <sup>28</sup>In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. <sup>29</sup>And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. <sup>30</sup>And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

**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

## You Are the Way; through You Alone

Lutheran Service Book 526, Lutheran Worship 283, The Lutheran Hymnal 355



1	You	are	the	way;	through	You	a - lone	Can
2	You	are	the	truth;	Your	Word	a - lone	True
3	You	are	the	life;	the	emp - ty	tomb	Pro -
4	You	are	the	way,	the	truth,	the	life; Grant



we	the	Fa - ther	find;	In	You,	O	Christ,	has
wis -	dom	can	im -	You	on -	ly	can	in -
claims	Your	con -	qu'ring	And	those	who	put	their
us	that	way	to	That	truth	to	keep,	that



God	re -	vealed	His	heart	and	will	and	mind.
form	the	mind	And	pu -	ri -	fy	the	heart.
trust	in	You	Not	death	nor	hell	shall	harm.
life	to	win	Whose	joys	e -	ter -	nal	flow.

## Devotional thoughts:

Someone asked Jesus, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” It’s a good question but I wonder if anyone is asking that question today.

Do you attend funerals? My parents were always faithful in honoring family and friends by attending their funerals. However, I noticed that some of my relatives never were at funerals even if they were very close to a deceased family member. I remember asking why they weren’t at a funeral. My parents told me, “They never attend funerals. They don’t want to think about death.” The question of salvation is important but we live in a time when many are going out of their way to avoid thinking about it.

You may have wondered, “Why did he use the word funeral?” The gurus of the funeral home industry have decided to market their product as “A Celebration of Life.” I suppose that sounds better than funeral. However, I’ve noticed that people do not cry less at “A Celebration of Life” than they do at a funeral. Death is real whether we choose to avoid thinking about it or not.

None of us likes to think about death. But when we avoid thinking about death, we also avoid thinking about the solution to the problem of dying. Our questioner today asked the only person who had the answer. More than that He is the answer!

Previous generations were confronted by death regularly. As I research family history, I am always shocked when I discover how many children died in infancy. No families seemed to escape that tragedy. But as medicine has improved and life expectancy has been extended, it has become easier to avoid thinking about the end of earthly life.

Once, when Paul and Silas were sitting in prison, the prison guard feared for his life. He asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They answered, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” (Acts 16:30-31). The jailer was saved. He and his family were baptized that very night (Acts 16:33). God worked things out for the jailer to be in the right place at the right time to ask the right question to the right people to get the right answer.

God has also granted to us the privilege of being in the right place at the right time to ask the right question to the right people to get the right answer. Unfortunately, many people choose to avoid asking the question about salvation. Yet we must always be ready to be like Paul and Silas. We must be ready to answer when someone does ask about salvation. Peter tells us to always be ready to give an answer to everyone that asks us the reason of the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15).

You have found the Narrow Door. You know Jesus. Through faith in Him, you have eternal life. You are looking forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come in the new heaven and the new earth. You are able to point the way to Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.

Our worship must never descend to being simply a time for religious entertainment. Our sermons must not stoop to becoming lectures on successful living. Faith must never be described as the means to prosperity. Our churches must not sink to becoming political action committees no matter how noble the cause.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, “And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). We know Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We know the Narrow Door to salvation. May many find Him through our words and actions.

“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** Lord, Jesus, thank You for being the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Grant that we may enter the narrow door of salvation through faith. Amen.

**C** Amen.

**L** Lord God, grant that we would not grow weary when we endure spiritual discipline. Grant that it would cause our faith to grow and our love to increase through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**C** Amen.

**L** O Lord, thank You for providing a new heaven and a new earth for our eternal home. Let us never become overly focused on our earthly pilgrimage that we lose sight of the resurrection and the world to come provided for us by our Savior Jesus.

**C** Amen.

**L** Shepherd of Tender Youth, bless our Christian schools and all the schools of our nation that children would be cared for with the same love and compassion that You have for us. As another school year begins, move our teachers to be faithful in their vocations to be a blessing to students entrusted to their care. Let honesty and integrity rule among the leaders of our schools. Enable our Christian teachers to faithfully share the love of Jesus with the little lambs of Your flock.

**C** Amen.

**L** Almighty God, bless all those who care for the sick and attend to the dying; all those who care for our children; and our police, firefighters, emergency personnel and disaster-relief workers. Increase our generous support of those in need. 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** Lord God, You have drawn to Yourself believers from all nations. Strengthen their faith and embolden their witness that many may be gathered into the new heavens and new earth; through 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.

# Shepherd of Tender Youth

Lutheran Service Book 864, Lutheran Worship 471, The Lutheran Hymnal 628



1 Shep - herd of ten - der youth, Guid - ing in  
 2 You are the ho - ly Lord, O all - sub -  
 3 You are the great High Priest; You have pre -  
 4 O ev - er be our guide, Our shep - herd,



love and truth Through de - vious ways; Christ, our tri -  
 du - ing Word, Heal - er of strife. Your - self You  
 pared the feast Of ho - ly love; And in our  
 and our pride, Our staff and song. Je - sus, O



um - phant king, We come Your name to sing  
 did a - base That from sin's deep dis - grace  
 mor - tal pain None calls on You in vain;  
 Christ of God, By Your en - dur - ing Word



And here our chil - dren bring To join Your praise.  
 You so might save our race And give us life.  
 Our plea do not dis - dain; Help from a - bove.  
 Lead us where You have trod; Make our faith strong.

5 So now, and till we die,  
 Sound we Your praises high  
 And joyful sing:  
 Infants and all the throng,  
 Who to the Church belong,  
 Unite to swell the song  
 To Christ, our king!

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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 ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST August 25—30, 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.  
**C** Amen.

### Verse of the Day: Luke 13:29

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. People will come from east and west, and from north and south, Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. And recline at table in the kingdom of God. Alleluia.

### Introit Psalm 117; antiphon Psalm 96:6a; 115:18

- L** Splendor and majesty are before him;  
we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the Lord!  
**C** Praise the Lord, all nations!  
Extol him, all peoples!  
**L** For great is his steadfast love toward us,  
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!  
**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** Splendor and majesty are before him;  
we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the Lord!

### 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. |

Acronyms are interesting. They are a quick way of referring to a long word or title. They are also a way of separating those in the know from outsiders. Here are a few acronyms. Some of them you may be familiar with and others possibly not: NASA, NACA, ASCII, DNA, CCR, and GOAT.

The last one on this list had me confused for a while. I would see it in print without explanation and wonder what it meant. I eventually learned that GOAT means Greatest Of All Time! It's mostly used in the sporting world. Athletes and sports fans love acronyms. Here are a few. RBI, NFL, ESPN, etc.

Here are two new acronyms that I'm sure won't catch on. They are LPOA and SPOA. They refer to two portions of the Bible. The first one stands for Longest Psalm Of All. You may know that the longest psalm is 119. Psalm 119 consists of 176 verses!

With that serving as a clue, you may have guessed that SPOA stands for Shortest Psalm Of All. Which psalm would that be? As you may have guessed, it is Psalm 117, the shortest psalm. It is only two verses long! It serves as our introit for this week and is supplemented by two other verses for the antiphon.

After today, no one will remember the acronym SPOA but psalm 117 has long been remembered and used by God's people. It is one of the six hallelujah psalms that were sung before and after Passover (113-114 before and 115-118 following). We assume it was sung by Jesus and His disciples on Maundy Thursday.

It begins with these amazing words, "**Praise the Lord, all nations!**" The word "nations" is often used interchangeably with gentiles. One day, all nations, all gentiles will praise the Lord!

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! No one is excluded from the family of God because of their race or nationality. Jesus died for all people everywhere. They are all welcome to believe in Him and receive the gift of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

**Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!**

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for sending Jesus to be the Savior of all nations. Grant us true faith that one day we may join the great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Amen.

## Tuesday

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

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Luke 13:29

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. People will come from east and west, and from north and south, Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. And recline at table in the kingdom of God. 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: O Lord, You have called us to enter Your kingdom through the narrow door. Guide us by Your Word and Spirit, and lead us now and always into the feast of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

What makes the door to Christ's kingdom narrow? The door is not narrow because it is difficult to enter. It is narrow because the true way to eternal life is contrary to our human mode of thinking.

The scribes and Pharisees characterized our human tendencies. They knew that the openly unrighteous were rejecting the narrow door. So they concluded that the way to salvation was their own personal righteousness. They had become so convinced of their personal holiness and worthiness that they closed the door to everyone else. They couldn't have been more wrong yet even today many agree with their way of thinking.

In Matthew 5:20, Jesus says, "I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Their problem was they were blind to their own sins. They only could see the sins of others. Therefore they rejected the narrow door because they didn't believe they needed it.

The narrow door is repentance and faith in Jesus. The narrow door is rejecting our own personal righteousness and accepting the righteousness of Christ as our own. The narrow door goes against human pride and reason which teaches us that we must save ourselves. The narrow door is God's grace and mercy. It is missed by many but easy to enter because it is a gift.

Let us pray: O Lord, You have called us to enter Your kingdom through the narrow door. Guide us by Your Word and Spirit, and lead us now and always into the feast of Your Son, Jesus Christ, 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: Luke 13:29

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. People will come from east and west, and from north and south, Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. And recline at table in the kingdom of God. Alleluia.

## Psalms 119:50:1–15

**L** <sup>1</sup>The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

**C** <sup>2</sup>**Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.**

**L** <sup>3</sup>Our God comes; he does not keep silence; before him is a devouring fire, around him a mighty tempest.

**C** <sup>4</sup>**He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people:**

**L** <sup>5</sup>"Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"

**C** <sup>6</sup>**The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge!**

**L** <sup>7</sup>"Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God.

**C** <sup>8</sup>**Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me.**

**L** <sup>9</sup>I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds.

**C** <sup>10</sup>**For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.**

**L** <sup>11</sup>I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine.

**C** <sup>12</sup>**"If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine.**

**L** <sup>13</sup>Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?

**C** <sup>14</sup>**Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High,**

**L** <sup>15</sup>and call upon me in the day of trouble;

**C** **I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."**

## 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>

Psalm 50:15 is one of the most comforting verses in the Bible. God says, “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

We often find ourselves in times of trouble and it seems there is no one to help. God tells us that He is always there to help when we call.

Unfortunately, when things are going well in life, it is easy to forget to call upon God in prayer. This is regrettable because for Jesus’ sake He has promised to hear all of our prayers. In fact, the Bible says, “Pray without ceasing!” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

I confess that I must include myself in this. It sometimes takes trouble for my prayer life to be invigorated. Yet when God answers my prayer, I am moved to thank and glorify Him.

God has delivered us from the greatest trouble of all. He has delivered us from sin, death, and the devil through Jesus Christ our Lord. May we ever glorify His name for this great blessing.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the promise of hearing and answering our prayers in times of trouble. Move us to pray at all times, when times are good as well as when times are bad through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Thursday

<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: Luke 13:29

<b>L</b>	Alleluia, Alleluia. People will come from east and west, and from north and south, Alleluia.
<b>C</b>	<b>Alleluia, Alleluia. And recline at table in the kingdom of God. 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>

## Isaiah 66:18–23

<sup>18</sup>“For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, <sup>19</sup>and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. <sup>20</sup>And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. <sup>21</sup>And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.

<sup>22</sup>“For as the new heavens and the new earth  
that I make

shall remain before me, says the LORD,  
so shall your offspring and your name remain.  
<sup>23</sup>From new moon to new moon,  
and from Sabbath to Sabbath,  
all flesh shall come to worship before me,  
declares the LORD.”

Many have noticed the surprising parallel between Isaiah and the entire Bible. There are 66 books in the Bible and there are 66 chapters in Isaiah. There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. Some have noted that the first 39 chapters of Isaiah correspond in an interesting way to the Old Testament and the last 27 chapters of Isaiah exhibit a remarkable correlation with the New Testament. For example, Isaiah 40 begins with “Comfort, comfort my people” which is an important Advent theme for our annual celebration of the birth of Jesus.

So it won’t be surprising to you that Isaiah 66 prefigures the 66<sup>th</sup> book of the Bible, Revelation. Isaiah 66:18 says, “The time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory.” In Revelation 7:9-10, we read, “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”

Isaiah 66:22 mentions “the new heavens and the new earth.” In Revelation 21:1-4, we read, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’”

The narrow door of faith in Jesus leads us to this “new heaven and new earth” where we will dwell with God forever and every tear will be wiped away from our eyes.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the gift of Your holy word. Grant that in our reading of the Old and New Testaments that we would always see Your plan of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## Friday

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

## Verse of the Day: Luke 13:29

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. People will come from east and west, and from north and south, Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. And recline at table in the kingdom of God. 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 12:4–24

<sup>4</sup>In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>5</sup>And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,  
nor be weary when reproved by him.

<sup>6</sup>For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,  
and chastises every son whom he receives.”

<sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup>Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup>For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, <sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. <sup>14</sup>Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. <sup>15</sup>See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; <sup>16</sup>that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. <sup>17</sup>For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

<sup>18</sup>For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest <sup>19</sup>and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup>For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” <sup>21</sup>Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” <sup>22</sup>But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup>and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup>and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Everyone gets discouraged from time to time. Things don’t go right. You try your hardest but nothing seems to be working out. However, we should never allow discouragement to cause us to believe that God doesn’t care.

Our Epistle lesson reminds us that sometimes God uses adversity as discipline. The word discipline here means training and instruction.

While driving by high school athletic fields this time of year, I often see young football players enduring the heat. They are experiencing “two-a-days.” These are summer practices that happen in the morning and in the afternoon. From what I understand, they are not fun. However, they help to prepare the young players for the intensity of competition.

This is what the Greek word *paideia* (discipline) means. Sometimes, God allows hardship and difficulty in life as a means of training. It is not evidence that God doesn’t care. It is quite the opposite. It is evidence that we are His children and He cares enough for us to want us to grow in faith and not become bitter.

The proof of His love for us is found in Jesus who is the mediator of a new covenant. We are not under the judgment of the Law rather He has called us to live with Him forever in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Discipline can seem unpleasant at the time. Training for righteousness can be difficult but it produces fruit. We become better people by enduring discipline and training. It is a sign of God’s love for His children.

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: Luke 13:29

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. People will come from east and west, and from north and south, Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. And recline at table in the kingdom of God. 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

<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 12:18–24

<sup>18</sup>For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest <sup>19</sup>and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup>For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” <sup>21</sup>Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” <sup>22</sup>But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup>and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup>and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Hebrews 12:18-21 refers to the experience of Moses and the Children of Israel during the Exodus as they came to Mount Sinai and received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19:16-25). When sinful people attempt to approach a holy God, we can only tremble with fear.

While the Ten Commandments give us an excellent guide for right living, they also reveal to us our woeful inadequacy and failures. When we understand the full implication of God’s law, it is like looking into a mirror and seeing ourselves as we really are—poor, miserable sinners. We cannot claim to have kept even the First Commandment, not to mention the other nine (Exodus 20:1-17). The Ten Commandments remind us of our sin and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a).

But thanks be to God. He has not left us trembling at the foot of Mount Sinai. He has given us the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23b). Because of Jesus, we have no need to fear our holy and almighty God. Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant. We have received the new testament of His blood which was shed for us on the cross. Through His sacrifice, God had declared us to be “not guilty.” Through the forgiveness won for us by Jesus, we have become pure and holy just as though we had never sinned. This is so wonderful that even the angels rejoice in a festal gathering.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the gift of the Gospel and deliverance from sin and death through the blood of Jesus. Create in me a clean heart and restore to me the joy of your salvation through the same Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

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