

# The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

## September 14, 2025

### 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!

**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 30:2–5; antiphon Psalm 30:11a, 12b

**L** You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!

**C** O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,  
and you have healed me.

**L** O Lord, you have brought up my soul from Sheol;  
you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.

**C** Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints,  
and give thanks to his holy name.

**L** For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime.  
Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

**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** You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you 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.

### 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: Lord Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd, without whom nothing is secure. Rescue and preserve us that we may not be lost forever but follow You, rejoicing in the way that leads to eternal life; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

### Ezekiel 34:11–24

<sup>11</sup>“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

<sup>17</sup>“As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. <sup>18</sup>Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? <sup>19</sup>And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

<sup>20</sup>“Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup>I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. <sup>23</sup>And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.”

**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 119:169–176

**L** <sup>169</sup>Let my cry come before you, O LORD; give me understanding according to your word!  
**C** <sup>170</sup>Let my plea come before you; deliver me according to your word.  
**L** <sup>171</sup>My lips will pour forth praise, for you teach me your statutes.  
**C** <sup>172</sup>My tongue will sing of your word, for all your commandments are right.

- L** <sup>173</sup>Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts.  
**C** <sup>174</sup>**I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight.**  
**L** <sup>175</sup>Let my soul live and praise you, and let your just decrees help me.  
**C** <sup>176</sup>**I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.**

## 1 Timothy 1:12–17

<sup>12</sup>I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, <sup>13</sup>though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup>and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup>But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup>To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

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

## Verse of the Day: Luke 15:10

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents, Alleluia.

## Luke 15:1–10

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter.  
**C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus]. <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup>“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? <sup>5</sup>And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup>And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ <sup>7</sup>Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

<sup>8</sup>“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? <sup>9</sup>And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ <sup>10</sup>Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

- 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

## Jesus Sinners Doth Receive

Lutheran Service Book 609, Lutheran Worship 229, The Lutheran Hymnal 324



1 Je - sus sin - ners doth re - ceive; Oh, may all this  
2 We de - serve but grief and shame, Yet His words, rich  
3 Sheep that from the fold did stray No true shep - herd  
4 I, a sin - ner, come to Thee With a pen - i -



say - ing pon - der Who in sin's de - lu - sions live  
grace re - veal - ing, Par - don, peace, and life pro - claim;  
e'er for - sak - eth; Wea - ry souls that lost their way  
tent con - fes - sion. Sav - ior, mer - cy show to me;



And from God and heav - en wan - der! Here is hope for  
Here our ills have per - fect heal - ing. Firm - ly in these  
Christ, the Shep - herd, gent - ly tak - eth In His arms that  
Grant for all my sins re - mis - sion. Let these words my



all who grieve: Je - sus sin - ners doth re - ceive.  
words be - lieve: Je - sus sin - ners doth re - ceive.  
they may live: Je - sus sin - ners doth re - ceive.  
soul re - lieve: Je - sus sin - ners doth re - ceive.

5 Oh, how blest it is to know:  
Were as scarlet my transgression,  
It shall be as white as snow  
By Thy blood and bitter passion;  
For these words I now believe:  
Jesus sinners doth receive.

6 Now my conscience is at peace;  
From the Law I stand acquitted.  
Christ hath purchased my release  
And my ev'ry sin remitted.  
Naught remains my soul to grieve:  
Jesus sinners doth receive.

7 Jesus sinners doth receive;  
Also I have been forgiven;  
And when I this earth must leave,  
I shall find an open heaven.  
Dying, still to Him I cleave:  
Jesus sinners doth receive.

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### Devotional thoughts:

(Note: If you have small children, you may wish to watch a YouTube video of “Jon and the Little Lost Lamb.” This is a reading of an Arch Book from Concordia Publishing House.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u29uCZKfGUg&t=33s> )

“Who do you think you are?” I’m sure that you have heard that expression. It is said about people who are uppity and arrogant. It is spoken about people who ought to know their place of lowliness and modesty.

A pastor friend of mine once told me this story. His sister is Dorothy E. Downton. She served as personal secretary to President Gerald R. Ford.

While my friend and his family were in Washington, D.C., his sister invited him to the White House. She told him to go to the visitors’ entrance and talk to the guard. They would be given a guided tour.

On the appointed morning, when they arrived at the White House, there was a long line of tourists at the visitors’ entrance. They walked to the front of the line.

As they passed the waiting people, they heard indignant tourists mutter loudly, “Who do they think they are?” They were annoyed and resentful that these individuals had the audacity to force themselves to the front of the line. They deserved to be put in their place. The guard should direct these uppity sightseers to their rightful place at the back of the line. Who did they think they were, indeed?

At front of the line, the guard asked each one to show their identification. The people in line watched as each one presented their driver’s license. When the final one was checked against a list, they were escorted into the White House. As they walked away, they could hear the formerly indignant tourists ask, “Who were those people?”

One day, tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to hear Jesus. The Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” They may have thought to themselves, “Who does He think He is? He should know better than to violate our rules about associating with that sort of people.” More than that, who do these tax collectors, and sinners think that they are? They should know their place at the end of the line. They have no business associating with important religious people.

In response, Jesus told two wonderful parables. One was about a lost sheep and the other was about a lost coin. These parables easily catch our attention. But let us not forget that our Gospel lesson is also about the Pharisees and the scribes. Who do they think they are?

They think that they are the religious elite. They believe that they are the cream of the crop when it comes to righteousness. They are the privileged and influential who deserve to be at the front of the line when it comes to sharing a meal with Jesus. But no, tax collectors and sinners are at the front of the line. These are the ones Jesus came to seek and to save (Luke 19:10).

And so I ask, “Who do you think you are?” Are you a Pharisee or are you a sinner? The Apostle Paul knew who he was. At one time he was a Pharisee’s Pharisee (Philippians 3:5). He didn’t need Jesus. He persecuted anyone who followed Jesus. He wrote to Timothy, “I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent” of Jesus.

He was one of the lost sheep but in his ignorance, he didn’t know it. He told Timothy, “But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.” The Good Shepherd found him and carried him on His shoulders all the while rejoicing.

The Apostle Paul shared with Timothy this most amazing statement, “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.”

Who did Paul think that he was? He was the chief of sinners! But the Good Shepherd found him and the angels in heaven rejoiced.

The tax collectors and sinners knew they were lost. They flocked to Jesus. Matthew, who was a tax collector, even became an Apostle and wrote one of the books of the Bible!

Jesus said, “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” There was much joy in heaven when Matthew, Paul, tax collectors and sinners came to Jesus not so much over Pharisees and scribes who believed that they needed no repentance.

So who do you think you are? Do you count yourself among the sinners or the Pharisees? Are you lost or are you found? Do you rejoice when one sinner repents? Or do you grumble saying, “Who does he think he is?”

This is a trustworthy saying, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Join Paul and the tax collectors and the sinners knowing that Jesus came into the world to save you.

“To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen” (1 Timothy 1:17).

“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** O Lord, thank You for searching and finding Your lost sheep. Keep us faithful to the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for us.

**C** Amen.

**L** O Lord, Jesus, You came into the world to save sinners. Give us patience as we interact with unbelievers so that they may learn of Your grace and mercy. Let us never become discouraged by those who act ignorantly in unbelief.

**C** Amen.

**L** O Lord, move us to help You in the search for lost sheep. Give us the joy of the angels when one sinner repents.

**C** Amen.

**L** O Lord, on this week of commemoration of the attack upon our nation which occurred on September 11, 2001, we offer You thanksgiving for those who selflessly ran to the aid of those in need and for protecting our country from further attacks in the years that have followed. Give us vigilant and wise leaders. Be with all who serve to keep us safe. 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.

**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.

**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.

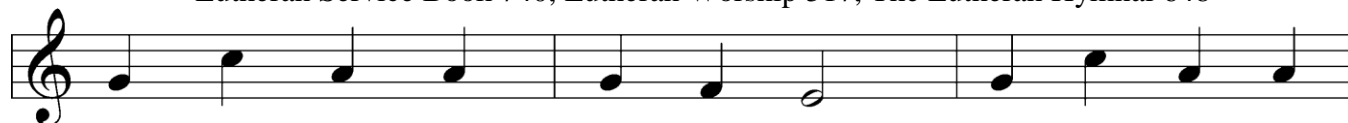
**C** Thanks be to God.

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

**C** Amen.

### I Am Jesus' Little Lamb

Lutheran Service Book 740, Lutheran Worship 517, The Lutheran Hymnal 648



1 I am Je - sus' lit - tle lamb, Ev - er glad at  
2 Day by day, at home, a - way, Je - sus is my  
3 Who so hap - py as I am, E - ven now the



heart I am; For my Shep - herd gent - ly guides me,  
staff and stay. When I hun - ger, Je - sus feeds me,  
Shep - herd's lamb? And when my short life is end - ed,



Knows my need and well pro - vides me, Loves me ev - 'ry  
In - to pleas - ant pas - tures leads me; When I thirst, He  
By His an - gel host at - tend - ed, He shall fold me



day the same, E - ven calls me by my name.  
bids me go Where the qui - et wa - ters flow.  
to His breast, There with - in His arms to rest.



**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 FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST September 15—20, 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 15:10

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents, Alleluia.

### Introit Psalm 30:2–5; antiphon Psalm 30:11a, 12b

- L** You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!
- C** O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,  
and you have healed me.
- L** O Lord, you have brought up my soul from Sheol;  
you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.
- C** Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints,  
and give thanks to his holy name.
- L** For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime.  
Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.
- 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** You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!

## 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>

Our introit begins, “You have turned for me my mourning into dancing.” I don’t know if that has ever happened to you. I’m almost ashamed to admit it but the closest I have come to experiencing this is watching my football team complete a come-from-behind last-minute victory.

We often invest our emotional capital in frivolous things such as sports. The joy that we experience in sports is the most fleeting kind. However, financial success and social fame are also transitory.

Our Gospel lesson for this week celebrates an enduring joy. Jesus said, “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” When a sinner turns from sin and comes to faith, there is eternal joy.

Jesus turned the mourning of the grave into the joyfulness of life through His resurrection from the dead. He did that for you and me. The Bible tells us that Jesus endured the cross for the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2).

We can participate in this joy by sharing our Christian faith with people who are living in the hopelessness of sin. Not only do the angels in heaven rejoice when unbelievers are saved, every one of us in God’s family joins in the celebration.

Let us pray: O merciful Lord, thank You for turning our mourning into dancing through the forgiveness that Jesus won for us on the cross. Grant us the opportunity to share that joy with everyone we meet through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Tuesday

<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 15:10

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents, 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>

**L** Let us pray: Lord Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd, without whom nothing is secure. Rescue and preserve us that we may not be lost forever but follow You, rejoicing in the way that leads to eternal life; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

The Parable of the Lost Sheep is one of the most loved parables of Jesus. Jesus doesn’t identify himself as the shepherd in the parable. In fact, He begins, “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?” Every one of His hearers can relate to the experience of losing a sheep and searching for it.

This is the mission that Jesus is on. The tax collectors and sinners are lost. He is searching diligently for them.

Why couldn't the Pharisees and the scribes understand this? They had convinced themselves that they were not lost. They had no need for a shepherd to find them. They thought everyone should be like them.

But everyone is like them. Everyone is sinful. Everyone is lost. And so are they. Jesus came to find us all!

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd, without whom nothing is secure. Rescue and preserve us that we may not be lost forever but follow You, rejoicing in the way that leads to eternal life; for You live and reign with the Father 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 15:10

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents, Alleluia.

## Psalm 119:169–176

**L** <sup>169</sup>Let my cry come before you, O LORD; give me understanding according to your word!

**C** <sup>170</sup>**Let my plea come before you; deliver me according to your word.**

**L** <sup>171</sup>My lips will pour forth praise, for you teach me your statutes.

**C** <sup>172</sup>**My tongue will sing of your word, for all your commandments are right.**

**L** <sup>173</sup>Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts.

**C** <sup>174</sup>**I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight.**

**L** <sup>175</sup>Let my soul live and praise you, and let your just decrees help me.

**C** <sup>176</sup>**I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.**

## 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.

The longest psalm of all ends with these words, “I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.” It reflects the lost sheep theme of the parable that Jesus told in the Gospel lesson.

I have never lost a sheep, but it must have been a common occurrence in Bible lands and times. What is remarkable here is not the lost sheep but that the psalmist recognizes that he has gone astray and he needs to be found by the Lord.

The Pharisees and scribes confronted Jesus because he “receives sinners and eats with them.” They were certainly aware of this verse. Unfortunately, they didn't believe that it applied to them.

They didn't believe that they needed to be found. That's why they took offense at Jesus and His love for the lost sheep.

There are a variety of reasons why people refuse to attend church. Admittedly, some are lazy. For others, the old sinful self prefers to pursue Sunday morning recreation. The list goes on.

The most heartbreaking reason for not attending church results from Satan deceiving us into believing that we don't need it. He convinces us that we aren't lost. We falsely believe that we are better than those sinners and tax collectors who attend. We aren't sinful.

Sheep, who fail to recognize that they are lost, are in great danger. Lions and wolves prowl around looking to devour them. But the Good Shepherd is diligent in His search.

The first step in finding lost sinners is bringing them to the recognition that they need a savior. The Holy Spirit works to convict us of our sins. When we look honestly into the mirror of God's law, our need for the Good Shepherd becomes painfully apparent. Then we join the psalmist in pleading for the Lord to seek and save us. This He has done.

We join the tax collectors and sinners at the banquet table of forgiveness with Jesus. He gives us His mercy and amazing grace! We once were lost but now we are found! We rejoice as our "lips pour forth praise" to the Lord from whom all blessings flow.

Let us pray:

Amazing grace how sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me

I once was lost, but now I'm found

Was blind but now I see. Amen.

## Thursday

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

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Luke 15:10

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents, 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.

## Ezekiel 34:11–24

<sup>11</sup>“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

<sup>13</sup>And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land.

There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel.

<sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

<sup>17</sup>“As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. <sup>18</sup>Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet?

<sup>19</sup>And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

<sup>20</sup>“Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup>I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. <sup>23</sup>And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.”

Ezekiel 34:11–24 is our Old Testament lesson for this week. It is a wonderful picture of the Lord Himself promising to be the Shepherd of His people. But to gain perspective on the reason for this promise, it would be good to read the first ten verses of this chapter. The Lord must come to shepherd His flock because their human shepherds have neglected their duties. They were more interested in feeding and caring for themselves than they were in caring for the people.

Not only was this true in Ezekiel’s day, but it was also true during Jesus’ earthly ministry. The Pharisees and the scribes should have been interested in caring for the tax collectors and sinners but they were only interested in themselves. The “sinners” were sheep without a shepherd.

When there is no shepherd for the flock, the sheep push each other aside. The weak are scattered (Ezekiel 34:21). But the Lord will rescue His flock (v22). He will set up over them one shepherd, His servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd (v23).

It is impossible to read these final verses of the Old Testament lesson without thinking about Luke 2. Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem because Jesus was to be born of the “house and lineage of David” (Luke 2:4). The angels appeared to the shepherds abiding in the field by night keeping watch over their flock. They heard the angel say, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:11-12).

Jesus is the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy. He is the one Shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd (John 10). He feeds and cares for the sheep!

Every generation is faced with the same problem of false and uncaring shepherds. We must cope with civil and religious leaders who care more for themselves than their duty to the flock. Jesus is the totally and completely reliable shepherd. He laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:11) so that we can dwell in the house of the Lord forever (Psalm 23:6).

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for delivering us from false and uncaring shepherds. Thank You for sending David’s Descendant, Jesus, to be our Good Shepherd. Give us shepherds who will faithfully teach us Your word of salvation through the same 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 15:10

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents, 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.

## 1 Timothy 1:12–17

<sup>12</sup>I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, <sup>13</sup>though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup>and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup>But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup>To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

In our Epistle lesson, the Apostle Paul writes one of the most significant sayings in the Bible, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Jesus came into the world to save only one kind of person. Only sinners will be saved! Those who claim to have no sin don’t want a savior.

Self-righteous people are offended when they are called sinners but not the Apostle Paul. Jesus came into the world to save sinners and Paul says that he is at the front of the line when it comes to sinning!

While reading this passage, I became curious about the Greek text because the ESV says, “of whom I am the foremost.” But the way I learned it in the King James Version is “of whom I am chief.”

The Greek word translated as foremost or chief is “*prótos*.” It literally means “first” and can be translated as first, foremost, before, principal, most important, etc. The Bible lists Peter as the “first” of the Apostles. Paul’s claim to fame is that he is the “first” among sinners. But he doesn’t say this with pride. He says it with shame. He confesses that formerly he “was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent” of Jesus.

No, Paul calls himself the foremost of sinners to show how patient God is. He holds himself up as the chief of sinners to show how God is merciful to even the worst sinners of all.

One of the great blessings of being a pastor is the opportunity to meet all sorts of people, young and old, rich and poor, famous and unknown. But I’ve never met a person who wasn’t a sinner!

However, I have met people who have convinced themselves that their past sins were so terrible that God couldn’t forgive them. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Paul tells them, “That is why Jesus came into the world. He came to save you.” “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

Every one of us has some sin or regret in our past. We are not proud of these transgressions but they are why Jesus came. Only sinners will be saved. Even the chief of sinners has had his sins forgiven, so do we.

### Chief of Sinners Though I Be

Lutheran Service Book 611, Lutheran Worship 285, The Lutheran Hymnal 342



1 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Je - sus shed His  
2 Oh, the height of Je - sus' love, High - er than the  
3 On - ly Je - sus can im - part Balm to heal the  
4 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Christ is all in



blood for me, Died that I might live on high,  
heav'ns a - bove, Deep - er than the depths of sea,  
wound - ed heart, Peace that flows from sin for - giv'n,  
all to me; All my wants to Him are known,



Lives that I might nev - er die. As the branch is  
 Last - ing as e - ter - ni - ty! Love that found me—  
 Joy that lifts the soul to heav'n, Faith and hope to  
 All my sor - rows are His own. He sus - tains the



to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.  
 won - drous thought! Found me when I sought Him not.  
 walk with God In the way that E - noch trod.  
 hid - den life Safe with Him from earth - ly strife.

5 O my Savior, help afford  
 By Your Spirit and Your Word!  
 When my wayward heart would stray,  
 Keep me in the narrow way;  
 Grace in time of need supply  
 While I live and when I die.

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## Saturday

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

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Luke 15:10

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents, 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.

## Luke 15:8–10

<sup>8</sup>“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? <sup>9</sup>And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors,



saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' <sup>10</sup>Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."



The Lost Drachma (La drachme perdue)  
James Tissot, c. 1890

The image of a shepherd searching for his lost sheep is so powerful that it is easy to overlook Jesus' second parable about a woman searching for a lost coin. I wonder why Jesus told this parable.

Both the shepherd and the women feel a sense of urgency for finding the lost. In both parables, the story ends with rejoicing.

But in the Parable of the Lost Coin Jesus adds a new dimension. The woman searched for the lost coin diligently. She is so anxious to find the coin that no amount of effort is too great. She will not give up until the coin is found.

The Greek word for diligently includes a flavor of care and anxiety. Her diligent search was driven by a concern that her valuable coin might never be found. She refused to stop until it was found.

Both of these parables bring us great comfort. Both the sheep and the coin are already owned by the searchers. They are simply lost, waiting to be found.

In the Parable of the Lost Sheep, I could imagine that a sheep might be able to find its way back to the flock. The coin has no way of returning to the woman on its own. You and I can take no credit for being found. Jesus does it all.

The fact that this woman is diligent and searches every nook and cranny is also comforting. It may take a while but she is determined to find her lost coin. Likewise, God's efforts to bring us back into His family never end. Some may be found early in life. Others will be found in the twilight of their years. It's never too late to come to faith.

Finally, there is a message for us searchers. Most of us are surrounded by unbelievers who are lost. We should never give up on them. Our search for them should be diligent. It may take consistent and concerted effort but there will be great joy when the lost are found.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for searching for us with great diligence. Thank you for finding us. Grant us diligence as we join in the search for those who are lost so that there will be joy before the angels over one sinner who repents through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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