

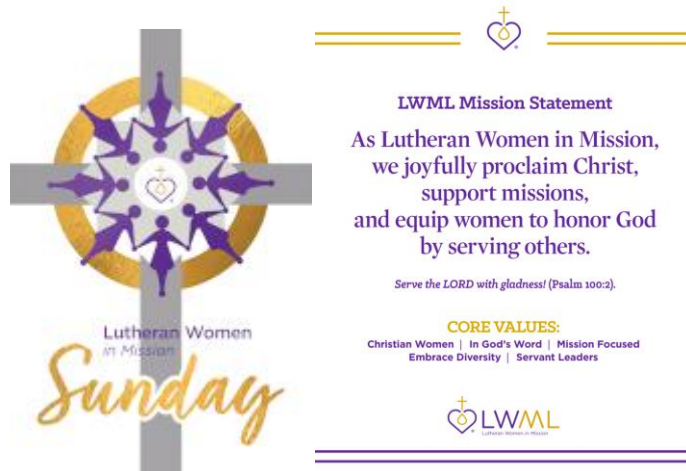
The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

LWML Sunday

October 5, 2025

In many Lutheran Church Missouri Synod congregations, this Sunday is known as Lutheran Women's Missionary League Sunday. As long as I can remember, it has always been the first Sunday in October.

About the LWML: The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is an official auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Since 1942, the LWML has affirmed each woman's identity as a child of God and her relationship with Jesus Christ. Lutheran Women in Mission (an alternate name of the LWML) are women of faith, empowered for active service in Jesus' name and bold support of missions through Mite Box offerings. As Christians, we have been given the kingdom of God to bear its fruit.



This year's theme begins a four-year cycle focusing on the LWML Mission Statement — As Lutheran Women in Mission, we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others. For Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday 2025 we focus on Proclaiming Christ.

Everything we do as Lutheran Women in Mission begins with Christ's message of repentance and forgiveness. The Ascension text of "GO" (Luke 24:44–53) is the mission emphasis for Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday 2025. On Ascension Day, Jesus gave his followers an assignment "that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations." We, as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, have a responsibility to proclaim the message of Christ, to be that body which proclaims repentance and forgiveness, showing forth the merciful Christ in what we do and say. As Lutheran Women in Mission we continue to support, encourage and uplift missionaries, and also provide physical support and compassion to all people. It is the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name that motivates us to do this work. All Glory be to Jesus!¹

¹ <https://www.lwml.org/lwml-sunday> accessed 10/4/2025

Holy Spirit, Light Divine

Lutheran Service Book 496, Lutheran Worship 166, The Lutheran Hymnal 234



- 1 Ho - ly Spir - it, light di - vine, Shine up - on this heart of mine;
2 Let me see my Sav - ior's face, Let me all His beau - ties trace;
3 Ho - ly Spir - it, pow'r di - vine, Cleanse this guilt - y heart of mine;
4 Ho - ly Spir - it, joy di - vine, Cheer this sad - dened heart of mine;
5 Ho - ly Spir - it, all di - vine, Dwell with - in this heart of mine;



Chase the shades of night a - way, Turn the dark - ness in - to day.
Show those glo - rious truths to me Which are on - ly known to Thee.
In Thy mer - cy pit - y me, From sin's bond - age set me free.
Yield a sa - cred, set - tled peace, Let it grow and still in - crease.
Cast down ev - 'ry i - dol throne, Reign su - preme, and reign a - lone.

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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 119:162, 164–165, 167; antiphon Psalm 119:166

L I hope for your salvation, O Lord,
and I do your commandments.

C I rejoice at your word
like one who finds great spoil.

L Seven times a day I praise you
for your just and righteous decrees.

C Great peace have those who love your law;
nothing can make them stumble.

- L** My soul keeps your testimonies;
I love them exceedingly.
- 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** I hope for your salvation, O Lord,
and I do 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. |

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 God, our refuge and strength, the author of all godliness, by Your grace hear the prayers of Your Church. Grant that those things which we ask in faith we may receive through Your bountiful mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

Habakkuk 1:1–4; 2:1–4

¹The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

²O LORD, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not hear?
Or cry to you “Violence!”
and you will not save?

³Why do you make me see iniquity,
and why do you idly look at wrong?
Destruction and violence are before me;
strife and contention arise.

⁴So the law is paralyzed,
and justice never goes forth.
For the wicked surround the righteous;
so justice goes forth perverted.

^{2:1}I will take my stand at my watchpost
and station myself on the tower,
and look out to see what he will say to me,
and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

²And the LORD answered me:

“Write the vision;
make it plain on tablets,
so he may run who reads it.

³For still the vision awaits its appointed time;
it hastens to the end—it will not lie.

If it seems slow, wait for it;
it will surely come; it will not delay.

⁴“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him,
but the righteous shall live by his faith.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual Psalm 91:11; 103:1

L He will command his angels concerning you

C to guard you in all your ways.

L Bless the Lord, O my soul,

C and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Psalm 62

L ¹For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.

C ²**He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.**

L ³How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

C ⁴**They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.**

L ⁵For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.

C ⁶**He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.**

L ⁷On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

C ⁸**Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.**

L ⁹Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.

C ¹⁰**Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.**

L ¹¹Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,

C ¹²**and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.**

For you will render to a man according to his work.

2 Timothy 1:1–14

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

²To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and

now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, ¹²which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Luke 17:3b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. If your brother sins, rebuke him, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. and if he repents, forgive him. Alleluia.

Luke 17:1–10

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 16th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹[Jesus] said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! ²It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. ³Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

⁵The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” ⁶And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.

⁷“Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? ⁸Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”

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

I Know My Faith Is Founded

Lutheran Service Book 587, Lutheran Worship 354, The Lutheran Hymnal 381



1 I know my faith is found - ed On Je - sus Christ, my
2 In - crease my faith, dear Sav - ior, For Sa - tan seeks by
3 In faith, Lord, let me serve You; Though per - se - cu - tion,



God and Lord; And this my faith con - fess - ing, Un -
night and day To rob me of this trea - sure And
grief, and pain Should seek to o - ver - whelm me, Let



moved I stand on His sure Word. Our rea - son can - not
take my hope of bliss a - way. But, Lord, with You be -
me a stead - fast trust re - tain; And then at my de -



fath - om The truth of God pro - found; Who trusts in hu - man
side me, I shall be un - dis - mayed; And led by Your good
par - ture, Lord, take me home to You, Your rich - es to in -



wis - dom Re - lies on shift - ing ground. God's Word is
Spir - it, I shall be un - a - fraid. A - bide with
her - it As all You said holds true. In life and



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Devotional thoughts:

(Note: This being Lutheran Women's Missionary League Sunday, I will consider the Epistle lesson today and save the Gospel lesson for Saturday.)

2 Timothy 1:5 mentions two significant women in the history and growth of the early Christian Church, Lois and Eunice. They were Timothy's grandmother and mother. Although they are only mentioned by name here, it is hard to overestimate their importance for us today. Yet in all likelihood, they never understood the important role that they were playing in the formation of the Church.

How is your memory? I've often quipped, "I have a good memory. It's just short." (I can hear my daughter say, "Daaaaaaaad!").

I've learned that things that stick in my mind aren't always the same things that stay in the minds of others. Now that I'm officially a "seasoned citizen" (How did that happen?), my children tell me things about their childhood experiences that I don't remember. Sometimes they tell me surprising things that I'm glad I didn't know about at the time. Other times, they recall events that warm my heart and make me proud to be their father.

With that in mind, imagine for a moment Lois as she brought Eunice into the world. She must have been proud of her little one. What dreams and hopes did she have for her daughter?

For those of us who are parents, we have all shared similar thoughts and questions about our children. We know that high on her list of priorities was sharing her faith with her daughter. This is the chief concern that Christian mothers have for their children.

I can picture Lois teaching Eunice about Noah's Ark, Moses and the Exodus, and all the great heroes of the Bible. Paul tells us that both Lois and Eunice shared a sincere faith. There can be no greater complement for a grandmother or mother, grandfather or father.

I'm not sure if there was a family turmoil or if Lois was disappointed. But when the time came for Eunice to marry, she married an outsider to her faith. She married a gentile.

Soon Eunice would have a child of her own. She named him Timothy which comes from two Greek words that mean "honor God." Although her husband did not share her beliefs, just as her mother had raised her in the faith, she was determined to raise Timothy in the faith. I can close my eyes and see her teaching him the same truths that she had been taught as a child by her mother.

While Lois was teaching Eunice, she most likely did not have her grandchildren in mind. While Eunice was teaching Timothy, she could not have known the impact that He would have in bringing Christ to the gentiles.

The Apostle Paul recognized the sincere faith that had grown up in Timothy. He saw in him a young man who would faithfully serve Christ's Church as a pastor. Paul understood that Lois and Eunice had diligently taught Timothy in his youth. He wrote to Timothy, "From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

Paul chose Timothy to accompany him on his second missionary journey. He helped Paul establish congregations in Macedonia and Greece. When Paul was driven from Thessalonica, Silas and Timothy stayed behind to nurture the church (Acts 17:13-15). He helped Paul establish the church in Corinth (Acts 18). When Paul couldn't go to a congregation himself, he sent Timothy (Acts 19:21-23). Lois could not have known when Eunice was a little, how the faith she shared with Eunice would impact Christians in churches from Rome to Jerusalem through Timothy. (And until this very day, I might add.)

2 Timothy is a bittersweet letter. Paul's love and respect for Timothy is evident. His concern for his ministry is clear. But what makes this epistle so poignant is that Paul knows that he will soon be executed. His days are numbered so he wrote one last letter to Timothy to encourage and strengthen him in the ministry.

In about A.D. 68, the Apostle Paul was executed under the horrendous persecution ordered by Emperor Nero. But Timothy carried on Paul's work of preaching and teaching. He faithfully brought countless people to faith in Jesus. The Church would not be what it has become without his work. This all began with Lois and Eunice.

God has called us all to our vocations. Some of us, he has called to be fathers and mothers. Others have been called to serve in other ways. Nevertheless, wherever and however he has called us to serve, we are called to serve faithfully. And just as he did for Lois and Eunice, God will bless our small efforts to serve him.

Without Lois and Eunice, there would have been no Timothy. And without Timothy, there is no telling what would have happened in the first century and the Church was being established.

God may grant you the opportunity to see the fruits of your service. I am pleased to see the success that my children are experiencing in life. Or He may not allow you to witness the impact that your efforts have had on the Church and the World. Nevertheless, we know that God can and does use our seemingly small and insignificant efforts to do great and wonderful things in the world.

The women of the LWML collect "mites" to do their work. In the same way, He blesses our small efforts to accomplish His purpose of bringing life and salvation to a dying world.

"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.

LWML PLEDGE

G In fervent gratitude for the Savior's dying love and His blood-bought gift of redemption we dedicate ourselves to Him with all that we are and have; and in obedience to His call for workers in the harvest fields, we pledge Him our willing service wherever and whenever He has need of us. We consecrate to our Savior our hands to work for Him, our feet to go on His errands, our voice to sing His praises, our lips to proclaim His redeeming love, our silver and our gold to extend His Kingdom, our will to do His will, and every power of our life to the great task of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him. Amen.

L Lord God, we pray for the mission of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League throughout the world, that every heart will beat with Your love and all hearts extend Your hand of service to others. Through the faithful gathering of mites, may the LWML continue to encourage us to put what You have given us into the mission of reaching the lost and erring.

G Amen.

Prayers

L O Lord, our heavenly Father, receive our thanks that You preserve Your Word in this world of uncertainty, confusion and lies. Grant us to love Your Law and rejoice in Your promises continually, that we may live in Your peace.

C Amen.

L Heavenly Father, Timothy learned of Christ from his faithful grandmother, Lois, and his faithful mother, Eunice. Bless all faithful parents and grandparents, that they might bear witness to Christ to their children.

C Amen.

L O Lord, preserve us from giving in to temptations and prevent us from tempting others to sin. When others fall into sin, grant us forgiving hearts. Increase our faith and trust in Your holy word that we would be faithful servants and live according to Your commandments.

C Amen.

L O Lord, give us vigilant and wise leaders. Be with all who serve to keep us safe. Bring peace and harmony to our nation in this time of contentiousness. 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.

L Almighty and everlasting God, deliver us from temptation and the powers of evil, that we may be faithful unto death and receive from Your hand the crown of everlasting life. Whether we live or die, we belong to You. Comfort us with this promise, that we may join the company of the saints on Your appointed day and enter into the heavenly places to worship at Your throne on high; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forevermore.

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.

Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

Lutheran Service Book 685, Lutheran Worship 381, The Lutheran Hymnal 409



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1 Let us ever walk with Jesus,
follow his example pure,
flee the world, which would deceive us
and to sin our souls allure.
Ever in his footsteps treading,
body here, yet soul above,
full of faith and hope and love,
let us do the Father's bidding.
Faithful Lord, abide with me;
Savior, lead, I follow thee.

2 Let us suffer here with Jesus,
to his image e'er conform;
heaven's glory soon will please us,
sunshine follow on the storm.
Tho' we sow in tears of sorrow,
we shall reap with heav'nly joy;
and the fears that now annoy
shall be laughter on the morrow.
Christ, I suffer here with thee;
there, oh, share thy joy with me!

3 Let us also die with Jesus.
his death from the second death,
from our soul's destruction, frees us,
quickens us with life's glad breath.
Let us mortify, while living,
flesh and blood and die to sin;
and the grave that shuts us in
shall but prove the gate to heaven.
Jesus, here I die to thee
there to live eternally.

4 Let us gladly live with Jesus;
since he's risen from the dead,
death and grave must soon release us.
Jesus, thou art now our head,
We are truly thine own members;
where thou livest, there live we.
take and own us constantly,
faithful Friend, as thy dear brethren.
Jesus, here I live to thee,
also there eternally.

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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 SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST October 6—11, 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 17:3b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. If your brother sins, rebuke him, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. and if he repents, forgive him. Alleluia.

Introit Psalm 119:162, 164–165, 167; antiphon Psalm 119:166

- L** I hope for your salvation, O Lord,
and I do your commandments.
C I rejoice at your word
like one who finds great spoil.
L Seven times a day I praise you
for your just and righteous decrees.
C Great peace have those who love your law;
nothing can make them stumble.
L My soul keeps your testimonies;
I love them exceedingly.
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 I hope for your salvation, O Lord,
and I do 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.

Psalm 119:161, 163, 168

¹⁶¹ Princes persecute me without cause,
but my heart stands in awe of your words.
¹⁶³ I hate and abhor falsehood,
but I love your law.
¹⁶⁸ I keep your precepts and testimonies,
for all my ways are before you.

A few years ago, I attended a week of classes on helping congregations in transition. We had two superb instructors and I learned a lot. However, as the week progressed, I would sometimes challenge one lecturer who made statements that didn't seem to be supported by facts. After a few times, I raised my hand and prefaced my comments by saying, "As you know, I am a contrarian." I had never thought of myself that way before but I am becoming convinced that there may be some truth in that statement.

A "contrarian" is defined as "a person who opposes or rejects popular opinion, especially in stock exchange dealing." I don't think that I am a "contrarian" by nature. Rather, I tend to be a critical thinker that wants to know the facts.

So when I looked at the introit for this week, I began to wonder why three of the eight verses in this section of Psalm 119 weren't included. Someone made a conscious decision to exclude these verses. But to be honest, I haven't been able to figure out why. Nevertheless, I did discover a verse that resonates with me, Psalm 119:163, "I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law."

Through the years, I have witnessed "well-intentioned" pastors and church leaders endorse dishonesty. Most of the time, this dishonesty did not take the form of outright lies. Rather, some Christians are sometimes tempted to omit facts and details to intentionally mislead people. There is no need to give examples here. However, suffice it to say that God does not need falsehood to accomplish His purpose.

Jesus tells us that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). There are at least three passages in the Bible that tell us that God cannot and will not lie:

Numbers 23:19

God is not man, that he should lie,
or a son of man, that he should change his mind.
Has he said, and will he not do it?
Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

Titus 1:1-2

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began.

Hebrews 6:18

so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

On the other hand, the devil is the father of lies (John 8:44).

It is a great blessing to know that God cannot and will not lie. This means that we can trust everything He has said and promised. God is not lying when He tells us that we are saved through faith in Jesus and what He has done for us on the cross. God is not deceiving us when He says, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

If God doesn’t speak lies or deceive then can we do any less? We gladly echo the words of Psalm 119:163, “I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law.”

However, if you have given into the temptation to lie or deceive, return to the Lord. His promise of forgiveness is absolutely true.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the truth of Your word. Forgive us where we have strayed from Your word and have been deceitful. Grant us the courage to always speak the truth in love through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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 17:3b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. If your brother sins, rebuke him, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. and if he repents, forgive him. 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 God, our refuge and strength, the author of all godliness, by Your grace hear the prayers of Your Church. Grant that those things which we ask in faith we may receive through Your bountiful mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Our collect uses the term godliness. In our contemporary society of overheated political rhetoric, even the definition of godliness is under attack. For the last two thousand years of Christian culture, we have shared a common understanding of godliness. It was defined by what God says it is in the Bible.

Now some define godliness as whatever happens to fit their own personal agenda and political opinion. We are living in a topsy-turvy world where ungodliness is being praised as godliness.

George Orwell wrote in his novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, about something called Newspeak. Newspeak introduces meanings of words to suit one's agenda. Today, the term “godliness” seems to be suffering that fate. It is not uncommon to hear pop-culture stars and politicians declare Biblical morality to be sinful.

I shouldn’t have been surprised when this started. It really is nothing new. The Bible warns us about those who “exchanged the truth about God for a lie” (Romans 1:25).

The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to avoid people who were ungodly but pretended to be godly.

2 Timothy 3:1-5

^{3:1} But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents,

ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

On the other hand, we must recognize our own ungodliness. We ought not to cover it up and pretend that it is really godliness. Rather, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

We need to remember this most amazing passage of Scripture:

Romans 5:6-8

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Let us pray: O God, our refuge and strength, the author of all godliness, by Your grace hear the prayers of Your Church. Grant that those things which we ask in faith we may receive through Your bountiful mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 17:3b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. If your brother sins, rebuke him, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. and if he repents, forgive him. Alleluia.

Psalm 62

L ¹For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.

C ²**He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.**

L ³How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

C ⁴**They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.**

L ⁵For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.

C ⁶**He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.**

L ⁷On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

C ⁸**Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.**

L ⁹Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.

C ¹⁰**Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.**

L ¹¹Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,

C ¹²**and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.**

For you will render to a man according to his work.

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.

You may have heard the old joke about a mathematician, a statistician, and an economist. All three were applying for the same job. After extensive interviews, each applicant was asked this question, “What is 2+2?”

The first one answered confidently, “Without a doubt, it is a mathematical truth that the answer is exactly four. The second applicant responded, “Statistically speaking, there is a high probability that the answer lies somewhere between 3 and 5.

Finally, it was the economist’s turn. He pulled down the blinds and glanced around the room before he whispered, “What do you want it to be?”

Part of the humor associated with this joke is that even the smallest child knows that 4 is the one and only correct answer to the question, “What is 2+2?” Just as assuredly, God alone is the only one who is our rock and our salvation. There is no other.

The true God is not just one option among many. Jesus is not just one way to salvation. Jesus is not one truth or just one life. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is foolish to believe otherwise. Psalm 62 echoes this absolute truth.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for being our Rock and our Salvation. Grant us the certainty of an unwavering faith to trust in You alone for forgiveness, and the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thursday

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

Verse of the Day: Luke 17:3b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. If your brother sins, rebuke him, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. and if he repents, forgive him. 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.

Habakkuk 1:1–4; 2:1–4

¹The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

²O LORD, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not hear?

Or cry to you “Violence!”
and you will not save?

³Why do you make me see iniquity,
and why do you idly look at wrong?

Destruction and violence are before me;
strife and contention arise.

⁴So the law is paralyzed,
and justice never goes forth.
For the wicked surround the righteous;
so justice goes forth perverted.

^{2:1}I will take my stand at my watchpost
and station myself on the tower,
and look out to see what he will say to me,
and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

²And the LORD answered me:

“Write the vision;
make it plain on tablets,
so he may run who reads it.

³For still the vision awaits its appointed time;
it hastens to the end—it will not lie.
If it seems slow, wait for it;
it will surely come; it will not delay.

⁴“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him,
but the righteous shall live by his faith.”

What did you think when you learned that our Old Testament for this week is from Habakkuk? Habakkuk is one of the lesser-known prophets. His book is only three chapters long. The *Concordia Self-study Bible* says, “Little is known about Habakkuk except that he was a contemporary of Jeremiah and a man of vigorous faith rooted deeply in the religious traditions of Israel.”²

It may surprise you to know that Habakkuk 2:4 (**The righteous shall live by his faith.**) is quoted three times in the New Testament. In Romans 1:16-17, the Apostle Paul quotes this verse to substantiate his understanding of the Gospel:

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “**The righteous shall live by faith.**”

He quotes it again in Galatians 3:11 to prove that no one can be saved by keeping God’s law: “Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘**The righteous shall live by faith.**’” Martin Luther reported that it was while reading this verse in Galatians that he rediscovered the Gospel message which led to the Reformation!

He later recalled:

I meditated night and day on those words until at last, by the mercy of God, I paid attention to their context: “The justice of God is revealed in it, as it is written: ‘**The just person lives by faith.**’” I began to understand that in this verse the justice of God is that by which the just person lives by a gift of God that is by faith. I began to understand that this verse means that the justice of God is revealed through the Gospel, but it is a passive justice, i.e. that by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: “The just person lives by faith.” All at once I felt that I had been born again and entered into paradise itself through open gates. Immediately I saw the whole of Scripture in a different light. I ran through the Scriptures from memory and found that other terms had analogous meanings, e.g., the work of God, that is, what God works in us; the

²Robert G. Hoeber, *Concordia Self-Study Bible*, "Lutheran edition of the NIV study Bible" --Foreword., electronic ed., Hab 1:1 (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1997, c1986).

power of God, by which he makes us powerful; the wisdom of God, by which he makes us wise; the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews also quotes it in Hebrews 10:38 in preparation for his great chapter on faith (Hebrews 11).

This one verse from Habakkuk has touched everyone who trusts in God for salvation. It is the key to understanding that the Gospel is salvation by grace through faith for Christ's sake!

While studying at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, I had the privilege of having Walter Roehrs for a class on the Old Testament. He wrote the Old Testament portion of the *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*. At the end of his comments on Habakkuk, he wrote:

Note: The word faith occurs only once in Habakkuk (2:4); but his whole prophecy is a word of faith, faith agonized, questioning, seeking, finding repose in God, and jubilant, finally, in the assurance of God's love, and all this in the face of the obstacle to faith posed by God's scandalously mysterious governance of history. When Paul quotes 2:4 in his thematic statement of justification by faith in Ro 1:17, it is only fair to assume that he is quoting with a consciousness of this original context of faith in Habakkuk. For Paul, as for Habakkuk, faith is confronted by an action of God which is offensively enigmatic, namely, the weakness and foolishness of the Cross; for both Paul and Habakkuk faith is faith without works, for both it is "quietly waiting" for God to do His saving work. For both, faith is not one aspect of man's existence before God but the whole of his relationship to Him.³

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the justification that You grant to us by faith. Continue to give us confidence to face each day because, through Your prophet Habakkuk, You have promised that those who are justified by faith shall live through 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 17:3b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. If your brother sins, rebuke him, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. and if he repents, forgive him. 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.

2 Timothy 1:1–14

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,
²To Timothy, my beloved child:

³Walter H. Roehrs and Martin H Franzmann, joint author, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*, electronic ed., 639 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998, c1979).

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, ¹²which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

Next week, I will be attending the annual All Pastors Conference of the Michigan District. On Tuesday night, there will be a banquet. At the conclusion of the banquet, we will honor pastors celebrating their 25th, 40th, 50th, and 60th anniversaries of ordination. In a bygone time, this was a particularly solemn ceremony with the presentation of an elegantly phrased certificate crafted by The Rev. W. Harry Krieger.

Rev. Krieger was a giant of a man who is little remembered today. He was elected president of the Michigan District in 1957 while serving Trinity Lutheran Church in Traverse City, Michigan. He served as president of the Michigan District until 1965. He was a key figure in the founding of Concordia University, Ann Arbor. In 1965, he accepted the call to become pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Jackson, Michigan. He was also elected as the fourth vice-president of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. In addition, he served as an Air Force chaplain to NATO bases in Germany.

It was about two dozen years ago that certificates composed by him were read for the last time at our banquet. The certificate for those celebrating their 40th anniversaries included this memorable turn of phrase, “as you enter the twilight of your ministry.” When the newly elected district president read those words, he paused and commented that in the future the wording would be changed. Apparently, what had been considered dignified language when it was written decades earlier was by then thought to be stodgy and stilted.

It turns out that there was an irony in Rev. W. Harry Krieger’s use of the expression “twilight of your ministry.” He was not allowed to experience the twilight of his ministry. He was called home in on January 13, 1974 at the age of 59.

As the Apostle Paul sat in prison composing 2 Timothy, he knew that the sun was setting on his ministry. Although he had done mission work and established congregations as he traveled across the Roman Empire, his days of travel were over. He would soon suffer a martyr’s death. If the mission and ministry that he had dedicated himself to were going to continue, it would be through the work of young pastors such as Timothy.

Paul had ordained Timothy through the laying of his hands. Now as he is experiencing difficult times and a doubtful future, he encouraged Timothy with these words, “God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” Timothy would have to carry on the word of the ministry.

Paul dedicated his life to our Savior Christ Jesus. He knew that Jesus had abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He worked tirelessly to bring that Gospel to everyone. But in the twilight of his ministry, he now must trust that work to Timothy.

If God should grant it, each of us, in turn, faces the twilight of our callings. Some, like W. Harry Krieger, never make it to twilight. We pray that God will raise up more Timothys who, like Paul, are not ashamed of the Gospel. May they follow the pattern of sound doctrine that Jesus Christ has established through the Apostle Paul. May Jesus Christ and Him crucified always be proclaimed from our pulpits.

Paul, Timothy, and W. Harry Krieger are gone but you are here.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the gift of pastors and other leaders in the Church. Continue to raise up generation after generation of faithful church workers to proclaim Gospel of salvation through faith in Christ. Let each one of us take up that task, as we are able, and then, when it is time, hand it on to those who follow after us in this sacred task. 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 17:3b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. If your brother sins, rebuke him, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. and if he repents, forgive him. 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 17:1–10

¹[Jesus] said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! ²It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. ³Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

⁵The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” ⁶And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.

⁷“Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? ⁸Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”

Have you heard the acronym “TMI?” It usually is spoken to someone who shares overly intimate, embarrassing, or vulgar details of a story. It means, “Too Much Information—Please do not tell me about such things, I have no need or desire to hear them.”

As far as I know, there is no corresponding acronym, TLI, “Too Little Information,” meaning, “Please tell me more so that I can understand.” If Luke were standing here in person relaying to me our Gospel lesson, I might be tempted to stop him and say, “TLI.” “I’m a little confused here. Please tell me more.”

Although I cannot have that dialogue with Luke, Mark provides some added information to help us understand these astounding words of Jesus, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.”

These words of Jesus are recorded in Mark 9:42 as well. The disciples had just been arguing with each other about who is the greatest. In response, Mark tells us, “And he [Jesus] sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, ‘If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.’ And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.’” Mark 9:35-37.

I can easily imagine that Jesus still had this child (little one) in his arms as He spoke about the seriousness of causing a little one to sin. Still, I can hear someone say, “But being cast into the sea with a millstone around your neck seems rather harsh.”

First, note that Jesus is not suggesting that people should be cast into the sea with millstones. Rather, he is saying that this would be better than the actual consequences of doing such a thing.

Second, here the ESV translation lets us down. The use of the word sin is misleading. The Greek word we normally expect to see translated as “sin” is *hamartia* which means “missing the mark” or “failure.” In English, we think of an “immoral act, wrong, wrongdoing, an act of evil or wickedness.” This is the Greek word used for sin in Luke 17:3. But this is not the meaning of “sin” in this verse. Instead, we find the Greek word *skandalizó* which the ESV translated as “cause to sin.” It literally means to put a stumbling block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall. A better translation might be “It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones [small children] to fall away [lose faith].” Jesus is talking about soul-destroying sin.

The souls of little children are precious in God’s sight. We must do everything to protect them. We must never do or say anything that would cause a child to lose faith in Jesus and thereby lose eternal salvation!

In 1913, Clarence Herbert Woolston, pastor of East Baptist Church, Philadelphia, published a children’s hymn that reflects the truth of our Gospel lesson:

Jesus calls the children dear,
‘Come to me and never fear,
For I love the little children of the world.
I will take you by the hand,
Lead you to the better land
For I love the little children of the world. *Refrain*

Refrain:
Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world;
Red and yellow, black and white,
All are precious in his sight,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Jesus is the Shepherd true,
And he’ll always stand by you,
For he loves the little children of the world.
He’s a Saviour great and strong,
And he’ll shield you from the wrong,
For he loves the little children of the world. *Refrain*

I am coming Lord to thee,
And thy soldier I will be,
For he loves the little children of the world.
And his cross I'll always bear,
And for him I'll do and dare,
For he loves the little children of the world. *Refrain*

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for granting faith to little children. Move us to do everything in our power to protect their faith. Bless the work of Lutheran schools and all Christian schools. Cause Sunday schools to flourish. Give parents wisdom to train up their children in the way that they should go so that when they are old they will not depart from it through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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