

# The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

## October 19, 2025

### Holy God, We Praise Thy Name

Lutheran Service Book 940, Lutheran Worship 171, The Lutheran Hymnal 250



1 Ho - ly God, we praise Thy name; Lord of all, we  
2 Hark! The glad ce - les - tial hymn An - gel choirs a -  
3 Lo, the a - pos - tles' ho - ly train Join Thy sa - cred  
4 Thou art King of Glo - ry, Christ; Son of God, yet



bow be - fore Thee. All on earth Thy scep - ter claim,  
bove are rais - ing; Cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim,  
name to hal - low; Proph - ets swell the glad re - frain,  
born of Mar - y. For us sin - ners sac - ri - ficed,



All in heav'n a - bove a - dore Thee. In - fi - nite Thy  
In un - ceas - ing cho - rus prais - ing, Fill the heav'ns with  
And the white - robed mar - tyrs fol - low, And from morn to  
As to death a Trib - u - tar - y, First to break the



vast do - main, Ev - er - last - ing is Thy reign.  
sweet ac - cord: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord!  
set of sun Through the Church the song goes on.  
bars of death, Thou hast o - pened heav'n to faith.

5 Holy Father, holy Son,  
Holy Spirit, three we name Thee;  
Though in essence only one,  
Undivided God we claim Thee  
And, adoring, bend the knee  
While we own the mystery.

6 From Thy high celestial home,  
Judge of all, again returning,  
We believe that Thou shalt come  
On that final judgment morning,  
When Thy voice shall shake the earth  
And the startled dead come forth.

7 Spare Thy people, Lord, we pray,  
By a thousand snares surrounded;  
Keep us without sin today,  
Never let us be confounded.  
Lo, I put my trust in Thee;  
Never, Lord, abandon me.

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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 74:18–19, 21, 20a, 22a; antiphon Psalm 74:2a

**L** Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old,  
which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!

**C** Remember this, O Lord, how the enemy scoffs,  
and a foolish people reviles your name.

**L** Do not deliver the soul of your dove to the wild beasts;  
do not forget the life of your poor forever.

**C** Let not the downtrodden turn back in shame;  
let the poor and needy praise your name.

**L** Have regard for the covenant,  
Arise, O God, defend your cause.

**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** Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old,  
which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!

### Kyrie

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

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

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

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

- L** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
- C** **Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.**
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:
- C** **Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.
- C** **For You alone are the Holy One,  
You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

## Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: O Lord, almighty and everlasting God, You have commanded us to pray and have promised to hear us. Mercifully grant that Your Holy Spirit may direct and govern our hearts in all things that we may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

## Genesis 32:22–30

<sup>22</sup>The same night [Jacob] arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup>He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. <sup>24</sup>And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. <sup>25</sup>When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup>Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." <sup>27</sup>And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." <sup>28</sup>Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." <sup>29</sup>Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. <sup>30</sup>So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered."

- 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 121

- L** <sup>1</sup>I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?
- C** <sup>2</sup>**My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.**
- L** <sup>3</sup>He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.
- C** <sup>4</sup>**Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**
- L** <sup>5</sup>The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand.

- C** <sup>6</sup>The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
- L** <sup>7</sup>The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.
- C** <sup>8</sup>The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

## 2 Timothy 3:14—4:5

<sup>14</sup>As for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup>and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

<sup>4:1</sup>I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: <sup>2</sup>preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. <sup>3</sup>For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup>and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. <sup>5</sup>As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

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

## Verse of the Day: Luke 18:8

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? Alleluia.

## Luke 18:1–8

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter.
- C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus] told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. <sup>2</sup>He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. <sup>3</sup>And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ <sup>4</sup>For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’” <sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. <sup>7</sup>And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup>I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

- 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

## How Can I Thank You, Lord

Lutheran Service Book 703, Lutheran Worship 385, The Lutheran Hymnal 417



1 How can I thank You, Lord, For all Your lov - ing - kind - ness,  
2 It is Your work a - lone That I am now con - vert - ed;  
3 Lord, You have raised me up To joy and ex - ul - ta - tion  
4 Grant that Your Spir - it's help To me be al - ways giv - en



That You have pa - tient - ly Borne with me in my blind - ness!  
O'er Sa - tan's work in me You have Your pow'r as - sert - ed.  
And clear - ly shown the way That leads me to sal - va - tion.  
Lest I should fall a - gain And lose the way to heav - en.



When dead in man - y sins And tres - pass - es I lay,  
Your mer - cy and Your grace That rise a - fresh each morn  
My sins are washed a - way; For this I thank You, Lord.  
Grant that He give me strength In my in - fir - mi - ty;



I kin - dled, ho - ly God, Your an - ger ev - 'ry day.  
Have turned my ston - y heart In - to a heart new - born.  
Now with my heart and soul All e - vil I ab - hor.  
May He re - new my heart To serve You will - ing - ly.

5 O Father, God of love,  
Now hear my supplication;  
O Savior, Son of God,  
Accept my adoration;  
O Holy Spirit, be  
My ever faithful guide  
That I may serve You here  
And there with You abide.

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## Devotional thoughts:

It is hard to imagine a world without judges. The first judges we encounter in life are parents. Children seek them out constantly to arbitrate disputes.

“Johnny won’t give me a turn.” “Make Sally share with me.” “He broke my toy.” These are just a few examples of appeals made in the court of judges named Mom and Dad.

Teachers and bosses also settle disputes. Finally, countries establish court systems to administer justice.

But sin is the only reason that we need judges. If people were not sinful, we would live in perfect harmony with one another. There would be no need for us to appeal to a higher authority to resolve our conflicts.

The ideal judge is totally impartial and gives rulings without bias. But we don’t live in a sinless world. Judges can become dishonest and self-serving. Even today, from time to time, we hear of judges who have succumbed to temptation and must be removed from office.

In the RSV, our Gospel lesson is titled “The Parable of the Widow and the Unjust Judge.” When Jesus told the parable involving an unrighteous judge, people certainly were able to relate. They all may have heard about judges who abused their positions of authority.

We don’t know the nature of this judge in a certain city. Some judges ruled in criminal hearings. One commentator suggests that this was a civil judge who handled financial cases.

We know that at another point in Luke, Jesus was called upon to be such a judge. In Luke 12:13-14, we read, “Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ But he said to him, ‘Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?’”

Jesus tells us that the judge in His parable is of the worst type. He admits that he doesn’t fear God and he doesn’t respect people. He feels no responsibility to anyone.

Unfortunately, the widow in Jesus’ parable must have had no other choice but to seek relief from this unrighteous judge. She knew that her cause was just. She did not tire in her efforts to have her case heard. I particularly like the title given to this parable in the ESV and NIV translations of the Bible. They call it, “The Parable of the Persistent Widow.” Persistence is the point of the entire parable.

There are no perfect judges in the world but the judge in this parable is particularly corrupt and despicable. But even with him, persistence pays off!

There is one perfect judge. It is God, Himself. If this unrighteous judge will finally relent, then certainly God in His goodness will hear and answer our prayers.

There are a couple of unique features to this parable. First, it is only recorded in Luke. Second, this is one of the few parables that begins with an explanation! Luke tells us, “He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.”

This parable is not primarily about widows and judges. It is primarily about persistence in prayer.

When God doesn’t answer our prayers as quickly as we would like, it is easy for us to lose heart and become discouraged. Jesus wants us to know that our prayers are not offered in vain. We should be encouraged to pray without ceasing, night and day.

We come before a righteous and holy Judge. He is happy to hear our petitions. He is our heavenly Father who loved us so much that He sent His Son to be our Savior!

But just as we rely on earthly parents, we must rely on the fact that God knows what is best for us even when we may not. This is why we pray, “Thy will be done.” God always answers our prayers in the best way and at the best time.

Sometimes He allows us to be persistent in prayer so we will learn to stop trusting in ourselves. 2 Peter 3:9 tells us, “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

We all have challenges in life. Some of them are more difficult than others. God wants us to bring all of them before His throne of grace. Do not become discouraged. The psalmist says, “Where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:1-2).

The fulfillment of all of God’s promises and the answer to all of our prayers is found in Jesus. He has granted us life eternal. One day, there will be no more unrighteous judges. We will live in perfect harmony with God and one another in paradise because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. We are grateful for all the blessings that He showers upon us in this life and in the one to come.

“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** Almighty God, the righteous call to You day and night, and You answer them. Grant us faith to rest securely in Your mercy and justice as we await the return of our Savior.

**C** Amen.

**L** O Lord, Timothy was charged to preach the Word in season and out. Grant us faithful pastors who will answer Your call and be faithful voices, speaking Your Word to those who have not heard it, to those lost in error, to those who have fallen away and to those who are weary. Bless our Lutheran school teachers and all those in full-time service to Your Church, and raise up many who will serve the generations to come.

**C** Amen.

**L** Judge of all, grant justice according to Your Word to those who suffer wrong. Give wisdom and understanding to the leaders of all nations, especially our own, that they may punish evil and reward good, fearing God and respecting man.

**C** Amen.

**L** Heavenly Father, You have caused the sacred writings of Your Word to be proclaimed through all generations. Encourage and strengthen parents to teach Your Word to their children, that Your people may be trained in righteousness and equipped for every good work.

**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. Grant that the new found peace in Gaza would be sustained.

**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** Gracious Lord, teach us to pray with persistence because You love us, always provide for us and promise to give justice to Your people who cry out to You day and night. Grant us faith to trust that You remain in control. Bless us with Your forgiveness, guidance and eternal life; 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.



## Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

Lutheran Service Book 924, Lutheran Worship 218, The Lutheran Hymnal 50

1 Lord, dis - miss us with Your bless - ing, Fill our hearts with  
2 Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion For Your Gos - pel's  
3 Sav - ior, when Your love shall call us From our strug - gling  
joy and peace; Let us each, Your love pos - sess - ing,  
joy - ful sound. May the fruits of Your sal - va - tion  
pil - grim way, Let not fear of death ap - pall us,  
Tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace. O re - fresh us;  
In our hearts and lives a - bound. Ev - er faith - ful,  
Glad Your sum - mons to o - bey. May we ev - er,  
O re - fresh us, Trav - 'ling through this wil - der - ness.  
ev - er faith - ful To Your truth may we be found.  
may we ev - er Reign with You in end - less day.

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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 NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST October 20—26, 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 mediate on what God has done for you.

### Monday

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

### Verse of the Day: Luke 18:8

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Alleluia.
- G** Alleluia, Alleluia. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? Alleluia.

### Introit Psalm 74:18–19, 21, 20a, 22a; antiphon Psalm 74:2a

- L** Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old,  
which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!
- G** Remember this, O Lord, how the enemy scoffs,  
and a foolish people reviles your name.
- L** Do not deliver the soul of your dove to the wild beasts;  
do not forget the life of your poor forever.
- G** Let not the downtrodden turn back in shame;  
let the poor and needy praise your name.
- L** Have regard for the covenant,  
Arise, O God, defend your cause.
- G** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
- L** Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old,  
which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!

## 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 74:1-2

<sup>74:1</sup> O God, why do you cast us off forever?  
Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?  
<sup>2</sup> Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old,  
which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage!  
Remember Mount Zion, where you have dwelt.

Psalm 74 is a fitting companion to our Gospel lesson on persistence in prayer. Most scholars believe that it was written following the Exile into captivity and before God brought His people back from Babylon.

Walter Roehrs writes:

This psalm will rise as fervently from the hearts and lips of God's *congregation* as it did in ancient Israel, whenever and wherever ruthless anti-God forces threaten to reduce all that is holy to *perpetual ruins*, making shambles of sanctuaries and suppressing worship.<sup>1</sup>

It seems like anti-God forces are gaining a footing all around us. We need Psalm 74 now more than ever! God is again calling His people to prayer.

Psalm 74 asks God to remember His people. We know that God never forgets us or fails to hear our prayers. The real problem is that we are prone to forget God. We go our own way. We focus on non-spiritual things. We believe that we are not accountable for our actions.

But God is patient with us. He is long-suffering in our relationship with Him.

At times, God may allow us to experience hardships so that we will be persistent in prayer. His desire is for us to remember Him and turn to Him for every blessing of body and soul.

His greatest desire is for us to repent of our sins and receive the gift of eternal life. He works everything out in our lives so that we will hear the Gospel and believe in Jesus. He is the one who turns death into life. He uses the cross to bring salvation. He turns defeat into victory.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for Your loving kindness. Keep us from becoming discouraged in our troubles. Make us persistent in prayer. Give us faith in Your promises of deliverance 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 18:8

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? Alleluia.

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<sup>1</sup>Walter H. Roehrs and Martin H Franzmann, joint author, *Concordia Self-Study Comentary*, electronic ed., 376 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998, c1979).

## Kyrie

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

**L** Let us pray: O Lord, almighty and everlasting God, You have commanded us to pray and have promised to hear us. Mercifully grant that Your Holy Spirit may direct and govern our hearts in all things that we may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

Learning the questions people have is one of the great blessings of teaching Bible classes. Unlike any other vocation, teaching the Bible allows you to consider every topic imaginable.

When I was preparing for the ministry, a solid liberal arts education was considered an essential prerequisite for attending the seminary. It was intended to provide a broad spectrum of knowledge to prepare us for relating to people from all walks of life. As a consequence, my undergraduate experience included literature, history, art, music, architecture, biology, physics, philosophy, sociology, and the like in addition to Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Biblical studies. Nevertheless, teaching Bible class and interacting with people as they wrestle with Scripture and life issues always presents new challenges.

One thing that I learned is that people are not the same. We don't think alike. We have different perspectives on life. This comes as a surprise to many people.

Contemporary pundits assume that people everywhere are the same and that once we understand that, we will all get along. We are all the same on one level. We all need food and clothes, etc. We are all sinful and need forgiveness. However, on another level, we are not the same. We think differently.

This little prologue may seem far afield from the topics presented in our collect for this week. But I first became aware of this while considering the topic of prayer in an adult Bible class.

First, our collect reminds us that God has commanded us to pray and promised to hear us. This statement seemed natural to me. It's part of our catechism. In Matthew 7:7, Jesus gives us three imperatives: ask, seek, and knock. By definition, an imperative is a command. In addition, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, instructs us to pray without ceasing.

So I was surprised the first time someone in class rebelled when I said that God commands prayer. This has happened multiple times over the course of my ministry. It was inconceivable to me that anyone found this concept to be distasteful. We are all different.

Second, you may have noticed that I'm a rather verbal person. My private prayer life consists of sentences and paragraphs. When I began my ministry, I wasn't aware that other people prayed differently. I quickly learned that some people offer prayers that can't be put into words. This, too, is a perfectly appropriate way to pray. God hears and answers all of these types of prayers.

Romans 8:26, states, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." Even the deepest meditation of your heart can serve as a prayer to God (Psalm 19:14).

Our most sincere prayer is that God would keep us steadfast in faith and devoted to Jesus and so receive the gift of eternal life.

I continue to learn much from teaching Bible classes. I'm sure that you would find them to be a blessing for you.

Let us pray: O Lord, almighty and everlasting God, You have commanded us to pray and have promised to hear us. Mercifully grant that Your Holy Spirit may direct and govern our hearts in all things that we may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of Your name; 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 18:8

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? Alleluia.

### Psalm 121

- L** <sup>1</sup>I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?  
**C** <sup>2</sup>**My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.**  
**L** <sup>3</sup>He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.  
**C** <sup>4</sup>**Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**  
**L** <sup>5</sup>The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand.  
**C** <sup>6</sup>**The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.**  
**L** <sup>7</sup>The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.  
**C** <sup>8</sup>**The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.**

### Kyrie

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

I grew up in a singing family. I can still sing many of the obscure songs that my dad sang when he was happy. My brother and I would sing at the piano while my mother played.

Valerie and I continue to sing. When our children were small, we all sang in the car during long trips.

We don't know how much Jesus sang while growing up. The Bible records that Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn after the institution of the Lord's Supper before they went to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26).

We do know that God's people are singing people. The Book of Psalms is the Old Testament hymn book. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:18b-20).

Each psalm from 120 to 134 is titled "A Song of Ascents." They were written to be sung while "going up." The Bible records that people went "up to the temple" and they went "up to Jerusalem" to worship God. We believe that these psalms were sung at those times.

Mary and Joseph took Jesus "up to Jerusalem" for the first time to present Him to the Lord forty days after His birth (Luke 2:22). They went "up to Jerusalem" every year to celebrate the Passover (Luke 2:41-42). We can picture them traveling as a family and singing psalms, most likely, the Psalms of Ascent as they neared the holy city.

Psalm 121 can be uniquely identified as a psalm to be sung on the way up to Jerusalem. It begins, "I lift up my eyes to the hills." You can imagine the pilgrim throng singing psalm 121 when they first glimpsed Jerusalem as they neared the end of their long journey. It is not hard to picture Mary, Joseph, and Jesus blending their voices with their fellow travelers.

As they looked up to Jerusalem, they continued, “From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” They undertook this trek precisely because they trusted the Lord to help them in their every need.

Other helpers may let you down. But “He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.”

God is tireless in providing protection. “Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.”

The trip to Jerusalem must have been plagued by the unrelenting heat of the Middle Eastern sun. But “The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.”

It would have taken several days to walk from Nazareth to Jerusalem. Every night they were required to find a new place to sleep. It was good to know that “The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.”

Travel in the ancient world was dangerous. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus told about a man who fell among robbers while going down from Jerusalem to Jericho (Luke 10:30). Mary, Joseph, and Jesus did not worry because “The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.”

In fact, God not only cares for you on your way to worship. He cares and protects you always on your way to the heavenly Jerusalem. Psalm 121 tells us, “The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.”

When I first contemplated Psalm 121 for today’s mediation, my mind immediately turned to the countless funeral services I have conducted and attended. The introit specified for the funeral service in Lutheran Worship is Psalm 121. Every time I read Psalm 121, I can hear Mark Steffens, our organist, chanting this psalm from the balcony at the funeral of one of God’s saints. It is an appropriate psalm for us who are still on our earthly pilgrimage as we celebrate our loved one who has ascended to the New Jerusalem to praise God with the angels, the archangels, and all the company of heaven. We rejoice in the perfect and complete help that was theirs through the One who not only made heaven and earth but also sent His only-begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the help that is ours in Jesus. Grant us faith to trust in Him during our earthly pilgrimage to our heavenly home through the same 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 18:8

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? 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.

## Genesis 32:22–30

<sup>22</sup>The same night [Jacob] arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup>He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had.

<sup>24</sup>And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. <sup>25</sup>When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he

wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup>Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” <sup>27</sup>And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” <sup>28</sup>Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” <sup>29</sup>Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. <sup>30</sup>So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.”

What’s in a name? Most names have a meaning. My first name is Philip. It comes from two Greek words meaning “a friend of horses” or “a lover of horses.”

I’m not sure that I embody the meaning of my name. I have ridden a few horses and ponies. I like looking at pictures of horses but I don’t have any displayed in my home. I know a few horse lovers and compared to them, I’m not a horse lover. I can easily live without horses.

Sometimes the nicknames people carry do actually describe them or something about them. I have heard of people who have been called Lefty, Red, or Shorty. All of these are descriptive names.

Our Old Testament Lesson recounts the day that Jacob was given another name that described him. It is the first time that he was called Israel. Genesis 32:28 tells us, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.”

He had done a remarkable thing. He had wrestled all night with the Angel of the Lord in human form and survived! This event is commemorated every time his name is spoken or read.

Psalm 32:28 is the first place the name Israel appears in the Bible. It appears for the last time in Revelation 21:12. A Bible concordance reports that there are 2506 occurrences of Israel in the Bible. It is well known today as the name of a nation in the Middle East!

There are several people in the Bible who have names that accurately describe them. The most important of these individuals is Jesus. His name means Savior. An angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:20-21). Jesus lived up to His name when He died on the cross for our sins.

You may or may not know the meaning of your name. Your life may not reflect the meaning found in your name.

But in Jesus, this has changed for us. We have the name Christian. The Bible tells us, “In Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.” Christians are “little Christs.”

Jesus died for the sins of the world. Nothing can add or subtract from that. But as little Christs, our lives should reflect the love and mercy that He has for the world. We should live up to our names and serve as beacons of righteousness in a corrupt and sinful world. Every place we go, people should remember this remarkable truth: Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the new name of Christian that You have so graciously granted unto us. Keep us faithful to Jesus so that many more would come to know Him through our words and deeds. 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 18:8

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? 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>

## 2 Timothy 3:14-17 KJV

<sup>14</sup> But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

<sup>15</sup> And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

<sup>16</sup> All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

<sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Did you struggle reading the King James Version of 2 Timothy 3:14-17? Thou and thee have passed out of our language. We have long ago substituted has for hast. Nevertheless, I am fairly sure that you could read and understand this passage from the KJV.

If you found it too difficult, here is the same passage from the New King James Version.

<sup>14</sup> But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, <sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

There are three places in this passage where I believe the ESV is a bit weak in its word choices. First, in verse 15, the ESV calls the “Holy Scriptures” the “sacred writings.” In the English language, “Holy Scriptures” refers to the Bible. “Sacred writings” is a term that we generally reserve for the writings of other religions. Even the NIV chose to use “Holy Scriptures” in this verse. Only the Bible (Holy Scriptures) makes us wise for salvation. None of the so-called “sacred writings” of the Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, etc. are able to bring us to faith in Christ Jesus or offer salvation.

Second, in verse 16, the ESV substitutes “breathed out by God” for “by inspiration of God.” The doctrine of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is obscured by this choice of words. The Greek word is a combination of the words “God” and “spirit” (or breath). It seems to have been coined by the Apostle Paul. The entire Bible is the creation of God’s Spirit! It is the product of God’s Holy Spirit working through human writers in such a way that the words of the Scripture are the words that God intended to be written. The Bible is God’s word! It is trustworthy. It is unfortunate that the ESV chose to eliminate the word “inspiration” that would direct us to this doctrine.

Third, again in verse 16, the ESV substitutes “profitable for teaching” for “profitable for doctrine.” The concept of pure doctrine has fallen upon hard times. It has become a forbidden word for some. So it is not surprising that the ESV chose to avoid using it. But doctrine is important. God never condones false teaching. Without right doctrine, it is impossible to be “thoroughly equipped for every good work.” False doctrine leads us astray. The only source of true, life-giving doctrine is God’s word.

If we want to know God, we must learn to know Jesus Christ. We learn to know Jesus through the teaching of the Holy Bible. May we always take this to heart.



Let us pray: Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that, by patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Saturday

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

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Luke 18:8

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia. I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? Alleluia.

## 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!

## 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 4:1-5

<sup>4:1</sup>I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: <sup>2</sup>preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. <sup>3</sup>For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup>and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. <sup>5</sup>As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Unfortunately, these important words of the Apostle Paul do not stand by themselves in our lectionary. They certainly deserve our attention.

Have you ever seen the arcade game called “Whac-A-Mole”? In this game, there is a small tabletop with five holes. Below each hole is a cute caricature of a mole. Moles randomly pop up from their holes. Your goal is to “Whac” (whack) the mole when you see it with a soft mallet. Faster reaction times earn higher scores. As soon as you whack one mole another one pops up.

I remember having long conversations with my vicarage supervisor, Eldor Haacke, about this passage. This was a time when some in our church called into question the accuracy and truth of the Bible. But over the years, I have noticed that as soon as one doctrinal problem is solved, another one will pop up just like “Whac-A-Mole.”

That is why, through it all, Paul instructed Timothy (and by extension, all pastors) to preach the word! People of every time and in every place need the straightforward proclamation of God’s holy law and comfort from the Gospel of salvation through faith in Christ.

This must be done “in season and out of season” with patience because people are constantly tempted to abandon the faith in favor of false doctrine. People develop “itching ears.” They only want to hear what they want to hear.

It is difficult for pastors to continue their work when people turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. But to fulfill their ministry, pastors must endure suffering in order to do the work of an evangelist bringing Christ to a dying world.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the gift of Your holy word. Bless pastors as they preach your word in season and out of season so that we may remain faithful to the truth and many will come to know our savior Jesus Christ. In His Name, we pray. Amen.

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