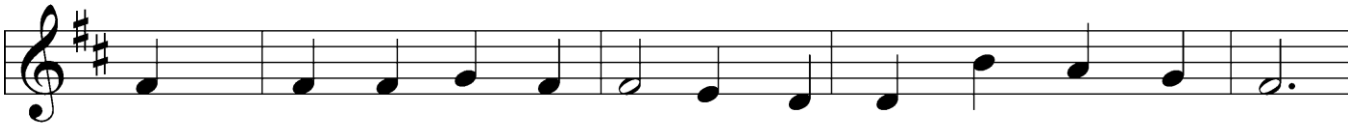
Home Worship Service for

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
The Lutheran Women's Missionary League Sunday
October 4, 2026

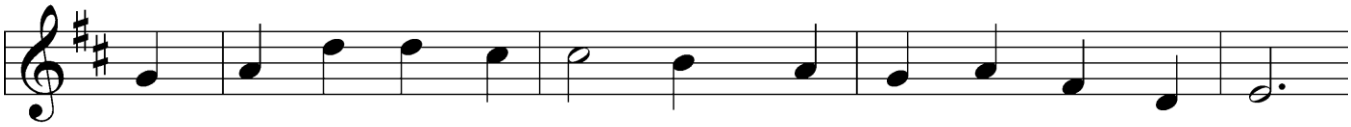
During the 40+ years of my active ministry in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, the first Sunday in October has been Lutheran Women's Missionary League Sunday. The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is the recognized auxiliary of The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod to coordinate the women of the church. The LWML continues to be a leading force in missions and ministry around the world through their sacrificial gifts of mites, tithes, offerings, and tireless service. The work of these Lutheran Women in Mission reaches people of all walks of life, foreign and domestic, in the interest of the advance of witness, mercy, and life together for all those who are loved into life through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Countless millions have been reached and saved alive for Christ through their ministry, and in these last days, we pray that their grace-filled, faithful labor in sacrifices and offerings may rise in the nostrils of our Lord in a way that is sweet and fragrant.

The Church's One Foundation

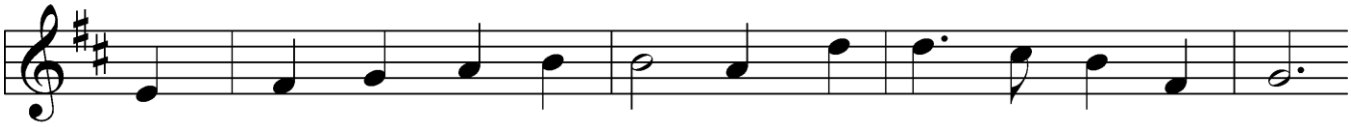
Lutheran Service Book 644, Lutheran Worship 289, The Lutheran Hymnal 473



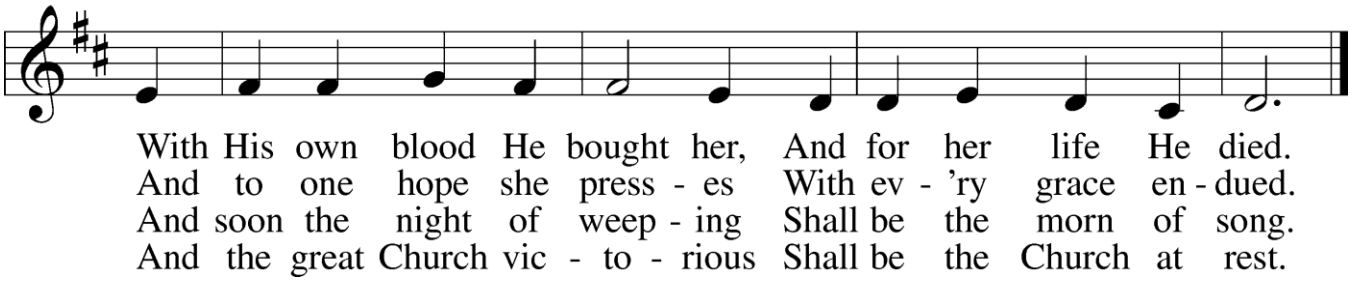
1 The Church's one foun - da - tion Is Je - sus Christ, her Lord;
2 E - lect from ev - 'ry na - tion, Yet one o'er all the earth;
3 Though with a scorn - ful won - der The world sees her op - pressed,
4 Through toil and trib - u - la - tion And tu - mult of her war



She is His new cre - a - tion By wa - ter and the Word.
Her char - ter of sal - va - tion: One Lord, one faith, one birth.
By schisms rent a - sun - der, By her - e - sies dis - tressed,
She waits the con - sum - ma - tion Of peace for - ev - er - more



From heav'n He came and sought her To be His ho - ly bride;
One ho - ly name she bless - es, Par - takes one ho - ly food,
Yet saints their watch are keep - ing; Their cry goes up, "How long?"
Till with the vi - sion glo - rious Her long - ing eyes are blest,



5 Yet she on earth has union
With God, the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O blessèd heav'nly chorus!
Lord, save us by Your grace
That we, like saints before us,
May see You face to face.

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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 118:22–24; antiphon: Psalm 118:1

L Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!
C **The stone that the builders rejected**
has become the cornerstone.
L This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
C **This is the day that the Lord has made;**
let us rejoice and be glad in it.
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 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!

Kyrie

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

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

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

Collect of the Day

L Let us pray: Gracious God, You gave Your Son into the hands of sinful men who killed Him. Forgive us when we reject Your unfailing love, and grant us the fullness of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

Isaiah 5:1–7

1 Let me sing for my beloved
my love song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
2 He dug it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
and he looked for it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.
4 What more was there to do for my vineyard,
that I have not done in it?
When I looked for it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?

5 And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.
6 I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and briers and thorns shall grow up;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
and he looked for justice,
but behold, bloodshed;
for righteousness,
but behold, an outcry!

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 to guard you in all your ways.
C **Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!**

Psalm 80:7–19

L [7]Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved!
C **[8]You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.**
L [9]You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land.
C **[10]The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.**
L [11]It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River.
C **[12]Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?**
L [13]The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.
C **[14]Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine,**
L [15]the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself.
C **[16]They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face!**
L [17]But let your hand be on the man of your right hand,
the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself!
C **[18]Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name!**
L [19]Restore us, O LORD God of hosts! let your face shine, that we may be saved!

Philippians 3:4b–14

[4]If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: [5]circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6]as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless. [7]But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8]Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ [9]and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— [10]that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, [11]that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

[12]Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. [13]Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14]I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

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

Verse of the Day Matthew 21:24b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Alleluia.**

Matthew 21:33–46

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 21th chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[33][Jesus said:] "Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. [34]When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. [35]And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. [36]Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. [37]Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' [38]But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' [39]And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. [40]When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" [41]They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

[42]Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

"'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes'?

[43]Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. [44]And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

[45]When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. [46]And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

The Apostles' Creed

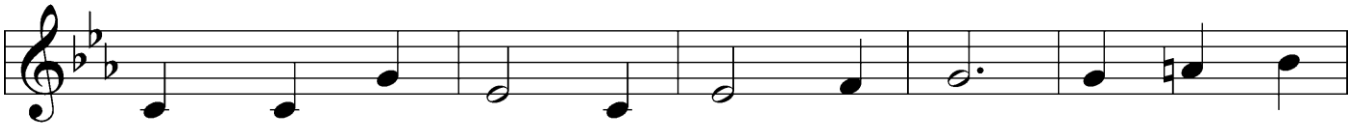
C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,**
maker of heaven and earth.

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.

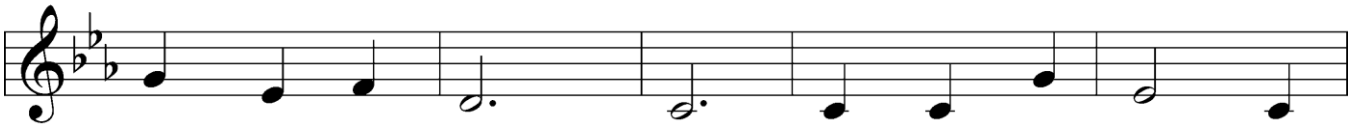
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

Built on the Rock

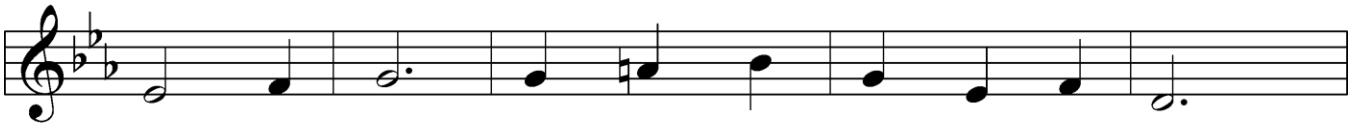
Lutheran Service Book 645, Lutheran Worship 291, The Lutheran Hymnal 467



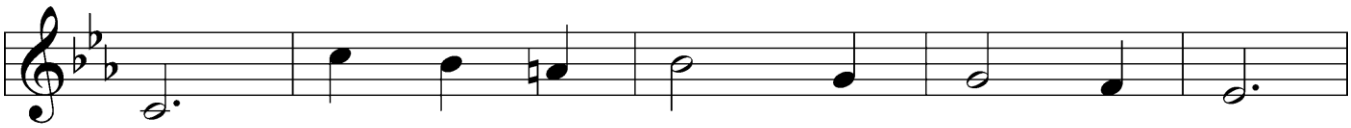
1 Built on the Rock the Church shall stand E - ven when
2 Sure - ly in tem - ples made with hands God, the Most
3 We are God's house of liv - ing stones, Built for His
4 Here stands the font be - fore our eyes, Tell - ing how



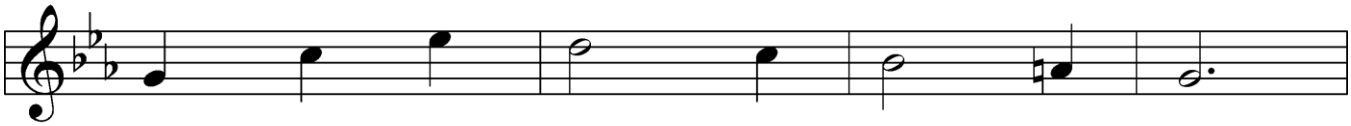
stee - ples are fall - ing. Crum - bled have spires in
High, is not dwell - ing; High a - bove earth His
own hab - i - ta - tion. He through bap - tis - mal
God has re - ceived us. The al - tar re - calls Christ's



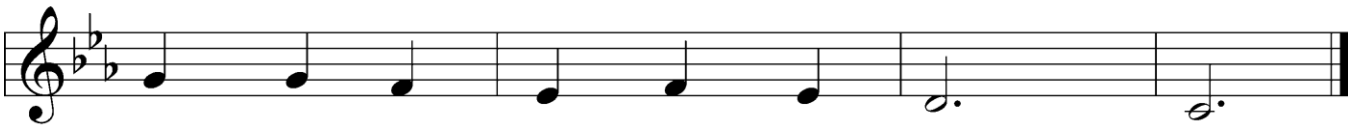
ev - 'ry land; Bells still are chim - ing and call -
tem - ple stands, All earth - ly tem - ples ex - cel -
grace us owns Heirs of His won - drous sal - va -
sac - ri - fice And what His Sup - per here gives



ing, Call - ing the young and old to rest,
ling. Yet He who dwells in heav'n a - bove
tion. Were we but two His name to tell,
us. Here sound the Scrip - tures that pro - claim



But a - bove all the souls dis - tressed,
Choos - es to live with us in love,
Yet He would deign with us to dwell
Christ yes - ter - day, to - day, the same,



Long - ing for rest ev - er - last - ing.
Mak - ing our bod - ies His tem - ple.
With all His grace and His fa - vor.
And ev - er - more, our Re - deem - er.

5 Grant, then, O God, Your will be done,
That, when the church bells are ringing,
Many in saving faith may come
Where Christ His message is bringing:
"I know My own; My own know Me.
You, not the world, My face shall see.
My peace I leave with you. Amen."

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Devotional thoughts:

On the outskirts of old Nazareth, there is a place to visit called Nazareth Village. It is an open-air museum in the heart of the bustling modern city of Nazareth. Jesus grew up a short distance away and it is not hard to imagine Him walking the terraced hillside of this fascinating place.

Nazareth Village is a reproduction of first-century life from the time of Jesus. Among other things to do and see there, you can sit in a synagogue, go to a first-century carpenter shop, learn the first-century way of spinning wool into yarn, and watch it woven into clothing. It is built on ancient agricultural land. The original farm has been restored with its ancient terraces, irrigation system, and stone quarry. It boasts the area's last remaining first-century wine press.

While reading the Gospel lesson for today, I could picture Jesus walking through this vineyard. I wonder. As a boy, did Jesus help with the harvest in this vineyard? Did He ever walk the short distance to this farm to play with children in the family? Did He watch the grapes being pressed into juice? Did He taste wine made from the grapes grown in this vineyard?

Jesus clearly knew all about vineyards. But more than that, Jesus knew human nature. He knew of greed and selfishness. They were unmistakably displayed by the chief priests and the Pharisees who first heard this parable.

The most familiar portion of Matthew 21 is Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. We celebrate it on Palm Sunday every year because it happened on the Sunday before Jesus' resurrection on the first Easter. Our text for today is the end of the chapter.

The chief priests and elders are angry with Jesus. They resent the adoring crowds of Palm Sunday. When He cleansed the temple, they saw their livelihood threatened. They didn't like John the Baptist. They like Jesus even less.

The chief priests, elders, and Pharisees in theory were working for God. In reality, they were only working for themselves. Indeed, this is nothing new. Corrupt leadership was a problem for Israel throughout Old Testament history. Jesus tells The Parable of the Tenants to drive home this point.

God had always been the Master of the Vineyard. He cared for the people of Israel in the same way a farmer cares for his vineyard. He planted it. He protected it. He watched over it. He placed those who should have been faithful to Him in charge of the day-to-day operations.

These leaders didn't want to serve the Master. They only wanted to serve themselves! Over and over again God sent His servants, in the form of the prophets into the vineyard of His people. Over and over again, they were beaten, killed, and stoned. Finally, the Master sent His Son!

It would have been amazing to live in the time of Jesus to see the very Son of God. Yet this is not what the chief priests and elders thought. They only saw Him as a challenge to their authority, to their income, to their lifestyle. And as we know, just as in the parable, they killed the Master's Son. How sad!

Nevertheless, their rejection of the Master's Son was used by God to redeem lost and condemned sinners. "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

We should not be too quick to simply condemn the chief priests and elders of Jesus' day. The same warning and promise are true today. When we think we are in charge of our own realities, moralities, and lifestyles, we reject the Master. God continually sends His servants to us today. Unfortunately, many choose to reject them. In some parts of the world, they are still beaten, killed, and stoned.

Yet for us who live in the vineyard and have been redeemed by the death of the Master's Son, we see this turn about as marvelous in our eyes. The rejected stone has become the cornerstone. Death has been changed to life. Sin has been covered with righteousness. The broken are healed.

May we joyfully work in the vineyard to advance God's kingdom serving the Master until "the great Church victorious Shall be the Church at rest."

"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 4:6-7).

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

Prayers

L Merciful Lord, encourage us by Your Holy Spirit, that we may not lose heart. Make us to be of one mind and will, that we may serve You with gladness. Bless the work of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League here and throughout the world.

C **Amen.**

L O Lord, You have planted, nurtured and hedged around Your vineyard, the Church. You sent Your dear Son to give His life for her and the whole world. Inspire Your people by Your Holy Spirit to bring forth much fruit for Your kingdom and grant that many will find shelter in Your holy sanctuary.

C **Amen.**

L Merciful Father, since Your Son has made us His own by His death, grant that when we share in His sufferings that we may also know the power of His resurrection.

C **Amen.**

L Merciful Lord, kindle Your divine light in us that we may hold fast to the word of life and shine brightly in the midst of this world's darkness.

C **Amen.**

L Lord, guide and give wisdom to our nation and its leaders, and to all judges and magistrates. Protect those who serve us as firefighters, police, disaster workers and medical personnel. 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 sufficient for their needs according to Your will. Help each of us to bear our crosses with patience and grace.

C **Amen.**

L Heavenly Father, keep us all ever mindful that it is only by Your grace we are included in Your kingdom and privileged to serve in it; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League Pledge

C **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.**

LWML
Lutheran Women *in Mission*

LWML Hymn

Serve the Lord with Gladness Tune: Onward Christian Soldiers,
Lutheran Service Book 662, Lutheran Worship 518, Lutheran Hymnal 658

"Serve the Lord with gladness!" It is He alone
Who redeemed us sinners, Guides us as His own
To enjoy the blessings Of His love and grace,
Will at last in glory Meet us face to face.
Onward, then, for Jesus! Let this be our aim:
"Serve the Lord with gladness!" Glorify His name!

"Serve the Lord with gladness!" He gave us command
To proclaim His Gospel Now in every land
So that fellow sinners May, like us, be blest.
Leading them to Jesus, We can serve Him best.
Onward, then, for Jesus! Let this be our aim:
"Serve the Lord with gladness!" Glorify His name!

"Serve the Lord with gladness!" There's no greater joy
Than to serve the Master, Work in His employ.
As we build His kingdom Angels, too, rejoice
Over every sinner Brought to hear His voice.
Onward, then, for Jesus! Let this be our aim:
"Serve the Lord with gladness!" Glorify His name!

Text: Prof. Ernest Lewerenz

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.**

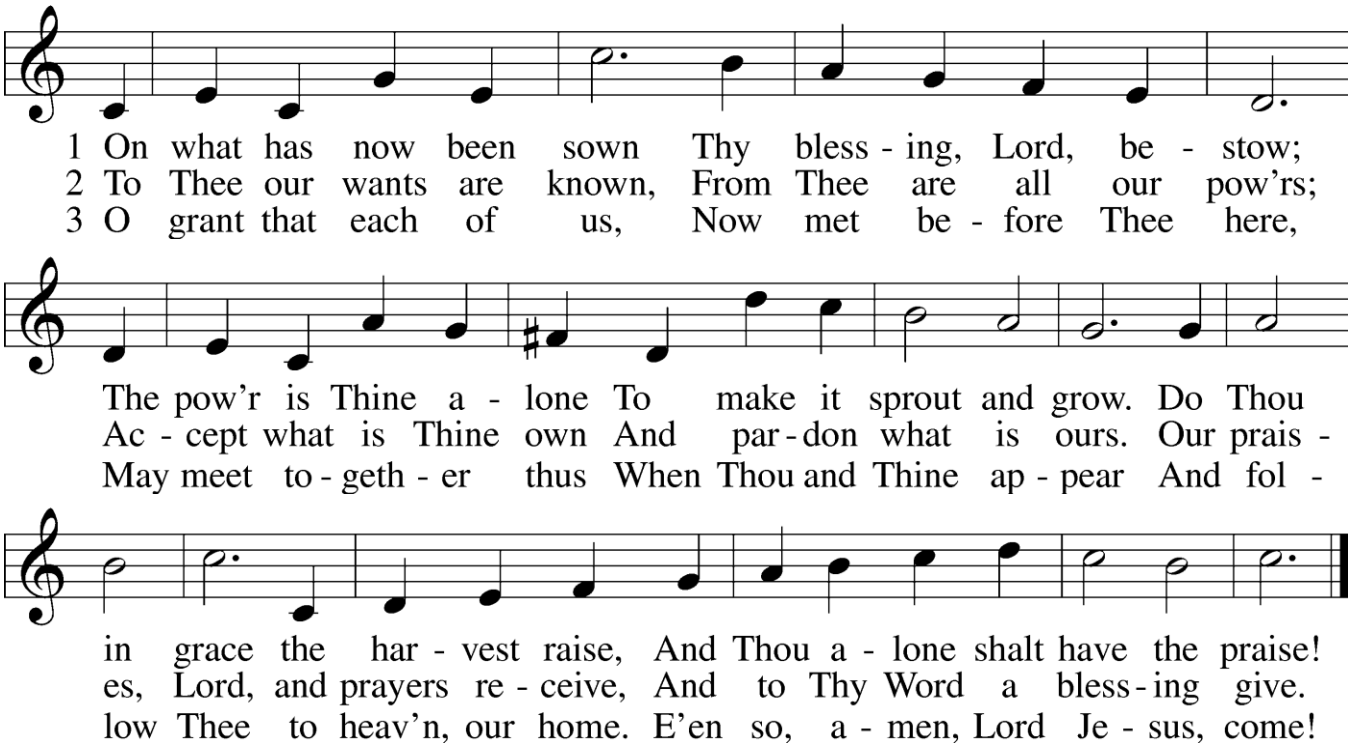
C **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is 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**

On What Has Now Been Sown

Lutheran Service Book 921, Lutheran Worship 217, The Lutheran Hymnal 46



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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 5—10, 2026

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.
C **Amen.**

Verse of the Day Matthew 21:24b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Alleluia.**

Introit Psalm 118:22–24; antiphon: Psalm 118:1

L Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!
C **The stone that the builders rejected**
has become the cornerstone.
L This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
C **This is the day that the Lord has made;**
let us rejoice and be glad in it.
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 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!

Kyrie

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

The introit this week contains the words from Psalm 118 quoted by Jesus in the Gospel lesson. It also contains a verse loved by many Christians, "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." It is interesting to see these two verses together.

Why should we rejoice and be glad? Because the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone! I often delight and rejoice in sunshine, sunrises, and sunsets. At this time of year, I rejoice in fall colors and crisp air. I love warm breezes and gentle waves on Lake Michigan. I am fascinated by clouds and weather of all kinds. Yet, when I rejoice in the Day that the Lord has made, it is so much more. This Day is the Day of Salvation!

It is the day that our sins have been paid for. It is the day when death is swallowed up by life. It is the day when God's own Son declared from the cross, "It is finished." It is the day the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." This is the most marvelous, wonderful, and awesome day of all!

L Let us pray. O Lord, let me rejoice each and every day that the stone the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. Grant me faith and confidence in the salvation won for me by Jesus on the cross.
C **Amen**

Tuesday

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

Verse of the Day Matthew 21:24b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. 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: Gracious God, You gave Your Son into the hands of sinful men who killed Him. Forgive us when we reject Your unfailing love, and grant us the fullness of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

I once worked a summer job in a very hot factory. I stood next to a molten crucible of aluminum. One ladle at a time, I filled the cylinder of a die-cast machine. Next, I pushed a button and a piston rammed the molten aluminum into a water-cooled die. A few seconds later, the die opened and I removed the freshly made cast aluminum part. I would repeat this process over and over again for eight hours a day. By the way, if you don't know, aluminum melts at 1,221°F.

One day, every 15 to 20 minutes a man would come and take a new casting. A few minutes later, he would come and adjust my machine. I soon discovered that he was cutting the castings and examining them. The

castings were not being made to the required specifications so he would return and adjust my machine. At the end of the day, I learned that my entire day's work was rejected. None of the castings could be used. Of course, I was paid for my work but I still remember the disappointment I felt when I learned that eight hours of working with molten aluminum had been rejected!

The factory had no other choice. The parts I made were below the required standard. Still, I felt bad. Imagine what it would be like if what I had produced was perfect but rejected.

That is exactly what happened to Jesus. His life was absolutely perfect, but He was rejected by the religious leaders of His day. Yet we know that ultimately, theirs was not the opinion that mattered. What mattered is that in God's eyes, Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law for us. For this reason, God seated Him at His right hand and made Him the head of the Church.

More than that, Jesus' perfect sacrifice on the cross was accepted by God as payment for the sins of the world. You and I are not rejected by God for our sins. Rather, we have received Jesus' righteousness as our own and have been welcomed into the family of God for time and all eternity. This is indeed marvelous!

Prayer: Gracious God, You gave Your Son into the hands of sinful men who killed Him. Forgive us when we reject Your unfailing love, and grant us the fullness of Your salvation; 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 Matthew 21:24b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Alleluia.**

Psalm 80:7–19

L 7Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved!
C **8You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.**
L 9You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land.
C **10The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.**
L 11It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River.
C **12Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?**
L 13The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.
C **14Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine,**
L 15the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself.
C **16They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face!**
L 17But let your hand be on the man of your right hand,
the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself!
C **18Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name!**
L 19Restore us, O LORD God of hosts! let your face shine, that we may be saved!

I live near many, many vineyards. This time of year, the smell of ripe grapes is everywhere. It is wonderful.

In the Psalm for this week, God's people are compared to a vine tended by God. As Israel grew, the vine covered the Promised Land from the sea to the River. Blessings abounded.

Unfortunately, the time of blessings did not continue. The people of Israel forgot about God. They

turned away from Him. The vineyard fell into disrepair. It was ravaged by beasts. It was burned by fire. It was cut down.

How can the vineyard be restored? Turn back to God, the vinedresser.

This Old Testament truth is still relevant today. God always wants to bless His people. Yet, because of our sinful nature, we continually turn away from Him. Often, we suffer the consequence of our sin. Unless we turn back to Him, we will suffer the ultimate consequence of sin, eternal separation from God.

Fortunately, when we do return to God, He restores us. He saves us from sin and blesses us with eternal life.

Prayer: O Lord, move our hearts to turn from our sin and return to You. Restore us and let Your face shine upon us, O 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 Matthew 21:24b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Alleluia.**

Isaiah 5:1–7

1 Let me sing for my beloved
my love song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
2 He dug it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
and he looked for it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.
4 What more was there to do for my vineyard,
that I have not done in it?
When I looked for it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?

5 And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.
6 I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and briers and thorns shall grow up;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
and he looked for justice,
but behold, bloodshed;
for righteousness,
but behold, an outcry!

Last week was Sukkot or "The Feast of Booths or Tabernacles." It recalls the time when Israel left Egypt and wandered in the wilderness. Its origin is recorded in Leviticus 23:42-43, "You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."

Today, it is a joyful time of celebration. It is also a time of celebrating the harvest. How appropriate! I

have been watching the harvest taking place all around me for the last few weeks.

Scholars suggest that this reading from Isaiah was proclaimed in Old Testament times during the celebration of Sukkot.

In this portion of Isaiah, we learn that God cares for His people as a vineyard. He protects it with a watchtower. He plants it in fertile soil cleared of stones. The vineyard is lacking nothing.

In spite of all this tender loving care, the vineyard grows wild grapes. This is the sad but true history of all humanity.

Still, God has not abandoned His vineyard. He sent the True Vinedresser to save His people. He cleared away the briars and the thorns of sin. He restored the vineyard to its intended purpose. He welcomes back all of His people who turn from their sins and dwell in the House of the Lord!

Prayer: O Lord, as we witness the bounty of the harvest, let us always bring to you our thanksgiving. Help us to remember that we are Your vineyard, that You tenderly care for us, and grant us a place in eternity with You because of the True Vinedresser. Amen.

Friday

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

Verse of the Day Matthew 21:24b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. 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.**

Philippians 3:4b–14

4If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5circumcised on the eighth day, of
the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6as to zeal, a
persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless. 7But whatever gain I had, I counted as
loss for the sake of Christ. 8Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing
Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that
I may gain Christ 9and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that
which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— 10that I may know him
and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11that by any
means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

12Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because
Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do:
forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14I press on toward the goal for the prize of
the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

As we continue our reading through Philippians, we take a break from the vineyard imagery for this week. The Apostle Paul declares that in human religious terms, no one is better than him. He has been exceedingly faithful to the religious laws and regulations of the Old Testament. Yet he knows that none of those things brings salvation. His own righteousness from following the law is worthless.

His righteousness must come from somewhere else. It comes from Christ. Everything else is unimportant compared to knowing the righteousness that comes from God by faith in Christ. His ultimate goal is to share in Christ's resurrection from the dead.

In this time of uncertainty and turmoil, it is an important reminder that we do not become distracted from the ultimate importance of knowing Christ and sharing in His resurrection from the dead.

Let us join Paul in pressing toward this goal, the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Prayer: O Lord, thank you for Jesus and the righteousness that He grants to us through faith. Grant to us a proper perspective on life valuing the gift of eternal life above all else, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Saturday

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

Verse of the Day Matthew 21:24b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Alleluia.**

Gradual Psalm 91:11; 103:1

L He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.
C **Bless the Lord, O my soul, 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.**

While we have been thinking of vineyards all week, it is good to pause and remember that Jesus is the cornerstone of our salvation. He is the Church's one foundation.

He is often rejected. We may become discouraged by the problems we have while living in a world that is hostile to the Christian faith. We may allow ourselves to become self-absorbed with our own problems and difficulties.

Pause for a moment to remember, "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." We live in the Day of Salvation. It is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone!

Yet she on earth has union
With God, the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O blessèd heav'nly chorus!
Lord, save us by Your grace
That we, like saints before us,
May see You face to face.

Prayer:

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.**

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