

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost October 15, 2023

It can be difficult to rejoice when the outlook is bleak and unpromising. The Apostle Paul experienced many difficult times but he had confidence in God who controls our future. Therefore he was able to advise the Philippians to “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Trusting in the promises of God made sure in Christ’s resurrection allowed him to be content in every situation. May we also have this peace that surpasses all understanding, even in these difficult times

Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng

Lutheran Service Book 813, Lutheran Worship 455, The Lutheran Hymnal na



1 Re - joice, O pil - grim throng! Re - joice, give
2 With voice as full and strong As o - cean's
3 With all the an - gel choirs, With all the
4 Yet on and on - ward still, With hymn and
5 Still lift your stan - dard high, Still march in



thanks, and sing; Your fes - tal ban - ner
surg - ing praise, Send forth the stur - dy
saints on earth Pour out the strains of
chant and song, Through gate and porch and
firm ar - ray, As pil - grims through the



wave on high, The cross of Christ your king.
hymns of old, The psalms of an - cient days.
joy and bliss, True rap - ture, no - blest mirth.
col - umned aisle The hal - lowed path - ways throng.
dark - ness wend Till dawns the gold - en day.



Re - joice! Re - joice! Re - joice, give thanks, and sing!

6 At last the march shall end;
The wearied ones shall rest;
The pilgrims find their home at last,
Jerusalem the blest. Refrain

7 Praise Him who reigns on high,
The Lord whom we adore:
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
One God forevermore. Refrain

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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 Isaiah 61:10; antiphon: Psalm 146:2

L I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

C I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;
my soul shall exult in my God,

L for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

C as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

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 will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

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: Almighty God, You invite us to trust in You for our salvation. Deal with us not in the severity of Your judgment but by the greatness of Your 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.

Isaiah 25:6–9

- ⁶On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
- ⁷And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.
- ⁸He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.
- ⁹It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

- 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 23

- L** ¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- C** ²He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.
- L** ³He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

C ⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

L ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

C ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Philippians 4:4–13

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. ¹¹Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹²I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day Revelation 22:17

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” Let the one who hears say, “Come.” Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Matthew 22:1–14

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 22st chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹Again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ³and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.’ ⁵But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. ⁷The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ ¹⁰And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹“But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. ¹²And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.”

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

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

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Lutheran Service Book 803, Lutheran Worship na, The Lutheran Hymnal na



1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore Thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!
2 All Thy works with joy sur-round Thee, Earth and heav'n re - flect Thy rays,
3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, Ev - er bless-ing, ev - er blest,



Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore Thee, Prais-ing Thee, their sun a - bove.
Stars and an-gels sing a-round Thee, Cen - ter of un - bro-ken praise.
Well-spring of the joy of liv - ing, O - cean-depth of hap - py rest!



Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, Drive the gloom of doubt a - way.
Field and for - est, vale and moun-tain, Flow - 'ry mead-ow, flash-ing sea,
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it, Foun - tain - head of love di-vine:



Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad-ness, Fill us with the light of day.
Chant-ing bird, and flow - ing foun-tain Call us to re - joice in Thee.
Joy - ful, we Thy heav'n in - her - it! Joy - ful, we by grace are Thine!

Devotional thoughts:

I have experienced many weddings. For better or for worse, through the years wedding ceremonies have changed. In my ministry, there have been three different wedding ceremonies in use by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. One is from the Lutheran Hymnal. Another is from Lutheran Worship. Now we have one from the Lutheran Service Book. Being curious about their differences, I researched wedding ceremonies and learned that Martin Luther's wedding service was very different from the ones we use today.

In the secular world, wedding ceremonies vary widely. I have heard of weddings happening while sky diving, scuba diving, and in many other strange venues.

Nevertheless, with all this change in wedding ceremonies, wedding receptions have not changed very much. Yes, some are very expensive productions and some are more modest. Some are set in beautiful surroundings and some are in barns. Yet, they all feature food and music.

According to the Bible, Jesus was very familiar with weddings. Jesus changed water into wine at the Wedding of Cana. Wedding receptions, or as the Bible calls them Wedding Feasts, must have been quite common. Just as today, they were festive occasions. In Mark 2:19, Jesus asks, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?" So in the Gospel lesson for this week, Jesus used a wedding reception for the lesson He wanted to teach. He said, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son."

The response of the people to the king's invitation is shocking. And to be honest, until the last few years, it was quite puzzling to me. No one wanted to come to the wedding reception. The invitation was ignored by some. But worse than that, the royal messengers were treated shamefully and some were killed.

In recent years, we have witnessed royal weddings in England. Invitations were coveted commodities. Guests willingly traveled for miles and miles to attend. All the guests wore their finest clothes. Stunning hats were on display. No one would ever think of refusing a royal wedding invitation. Then, why is it that the royal wedding feast in Jesus' parable turned out so poorly?

Living in the United States these last few years, especially during election seasons has given me the answer. Politics! It seems that the invited guests refused to attend because they did not want to be seen as supporting the authority of the king! Snubbing the royal invitation to the wedding was a way of rejecting the king! It was an act of rebellion!

In the parable, this revolt could not be left unpunished. The rebellion was crushed. The insurgent city was burned.

However, the king would not be denied. The wedding feast for his son would be as glorious as anticipated. If the nobility would not attend, then the common folk will! No entrance test was administered. All were invited, both the good and the bad. The wedding hall was filled.

One guest, however, chose to snub the king. He arrived without a wedding garment. Some commentators suggest that the wedding garment may have been provided but it was refused. Whatever the case may be, this wedding guest chose to identify himself with the rebels. The king would not be insulted at his son's wedding. Out goes the guest, bound hand and foot, and cast into the outer darkness.

This interesting wedding story teaches us a lesson about the Kingdom of Heaven. As our Old Testament lesson from Isaiah indicates, it is a great banquet with the finest foods and wine. The King is the Heavenly Father. The Son is Jesus. The banquet is salvation. We are the guests.

In these chapters of Matthew, we learn that Jesus was under constant attack from religious authorities. They were the ones who should be serving God, Jesus' Father. However, they were in rebellion against God and His ultimate authority. They were the ones who should be first in line at the wedding feast but they have lost their place. Instead, it is filled with lowly people found on the highways and byways.

You and I are among these lowly guests. We are not worthy to receive the invitation. Yet here we are at the banquet. We have been given the white robe of righteousness won for us by Christ on the cross. We enter the Kingdom of Heaven by pure grace.

Unfortunately, some refuse this grace. Despite all that God has done for them, some continue to be in rebellion against His goodness. It is disheartening to see, but such are the facts. Many are called but few are chosen.

May we rejoice in the Lord always because of His wonderful gift of grace and the promise of a seat at His banquet table of heaven where death is swallowed up forever.

“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 Heavenly King, Your Son, Jesus Christ, purchased us with His precious blood. Keep us in the pure teaching of Your Word and in the unity of the faith.

C Amen.

L Heavenly King, You send out Your invitation that all who believe in Your Son should take their seats at His feast. Let the proclamation of Your word call many to repentance and faith that Your eternal banquet hall would be filled.

C Amen.

L Heavenly King, bless all families and the homes in which our people dwell. Grant grace to husbands and wives, that they may be faithful to one another and to their children. Grant also that they may faithfully teach and learn the faith in their families.

C Amen.

L Heavenly King, keep the coming of Your Son always at the forefront of our hearts and minds, that we may live in continual godliness and the peace that passes all understanding.

C Amen.

L O God of peace, during this time of war in the ancient land of Israel, we pray that You would grant a swift end to the conflict, that right and justice would prevail, and that You would grant Your mighty hand of protection to the innocent and helpless.

C Amen.

L Righteous God, You give leaders to every nation and people. Grant us good and wise public servants defend the innocent and punish evil. Guard those who protect us, especially our armed forces, police and firefighters.

C Amen.

L Heavenly Father, Your Son came to heal the sick and forgive sinners. Hear our prayers for those who suffer in any way. Restore them according to Your gracious will, and strengthen their trust in Your faithfulness and love. Let Your blessings rest upon all medical personnel and first responders who come to our aid in time of need.

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.

In Thee Is Gladness

Lutheran Service Book 818, Lutheran Worship 442, The Lutheran Hymnal na

1 In Thee is glad - ness A - mid all sad - ness, Je - sus,
2 Since He is ours, _____ We fear no pow - ers, Not of
sun - shine of my heart. By Thee are giv - en The gifts of
earth nor sin nor death. He sees and bless - es In worst dis -
heav - en, Thou the true Re - deem - er art. Our souls Thou
tress - es; He can change them with a breath. Where-fore the
wak - est, Our bonds Thou break - est; Who trusts Thee sure - ly Has built se -
sto - ry Tell of His glo - ry With hearts and voic - es; All heav'n re -
cure - ly; He stands for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia! Our hearts are
joic - es In Him for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia! We shout for
pin - ing To see Thy shin - ing, Dy - ing or liv - ing
glad - ness, Tri - umph o'er sad - ness, Love Him and praise Him
To Thee are cleav - ing; Naught can us sev - er: Al - le - lu - ia!
And still shall raise Him Glad hymns for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia!

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 Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost October 16 – 21, 2023

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 Revelation 22:17

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." Let the one who hears say, "Come." Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Introit Isaiah 61:10; antiphon: Psalm 146:2

- L** I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.
- C** I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;
my soul shall exult in my God,
- L** for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
- C** as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
- 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 will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

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.

Our introit this week is a little different. Following the antiphon from Psalm 146, we find a verse from Isaiah 61. Isaiah 61 is a wonderful chapter and I would encourage you to read it.

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus traveled to His hometown of Nazareth. There in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, He read the first verses of Isaiah 61.

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” (Luke 4:18-19)

When the Isaiah scroll was closed and all eyes were fixed on Him, Jesus declared, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” In speaking these words, Jesus told the people that He is the long-promised Messiah, spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah.

In verse 10 of Isaiah 61, our introit this week recognizes that we are the recipients of all the blessings the promised Messiah has. Through His death on the cross, we have been covered with the robe of righteousness. We have been adorned as the Bride of Christ. Eternal salvation is ours!

L Let us pray. O Lord, thank You for the gift of salvation earned for us by Your only-begotten Son. Grant that we may praise You as long as we live and sing praises to You with all of our soul.
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 Revelation 22:17

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” Let the one who hears say, “Come.” Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. Alleluia. 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.

Collect of the Day

L Let us pray: Almighty God, You invite us to trust in You for our salvation. Deal with us not in the severity of Your judgment but by the greatness of Your 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.

In my youth, there was a television commercial with the tagline, “It’s not nice to fool Mother Nature.” The idea of “Mother Nature” has come down to us from the pagan Greco-Roman world of classical times. It is not a particularly healthy concept for Christians who believe in God the Father Almighty who created heaven and earth.

Nevertheless, this old TV commercial can teach us a lesson. It is not nice to fool God! In fact, it is impossible to fool God. All of our supposed piety is exposed to God as imperfect and unacceptable before the throne of the almighty. Yet God is a God of great mercy.

Coming to Him in humility and trust, we do not receive judgment but salvation! As the hymn **Rock of Ages** declares, “Nothing in my hand I bring; Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

L Let us pray: Almighty God, You invite us to trust in You for our salvation. Deal with us not in the severity of Your judgment but by the greatness of Your 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.

Wednesday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day Revelation 22:17

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” Let the one who hears say, “Come.” Alleluia.

C **Alleluia, Alleluia. Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. Alleluia. 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.**

Psalm 23

L ¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

C ²**He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.**

L ³He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

C ⁴**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

L ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

C ⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

The 23rd Psalm is beloved by Christians in every land and of every language. My mother had a plaque in her kitchen with these words in Spanish.

Word by word, verse by verse this psalm brings comfort to troubled souls in all stations and times of life.

I recently viewed a documentary of the Doolittle Raid over Japan on April 18, 1942. In this raid, land-based bombers were launched from an aircraft carrier to attack Japan in retaliation for the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. The raiders knew that this was a one-way mission. There would be no return.

In this documentary, one of the raiders declared, “As we took to the air, all I could do was to repeat over

and over again, ‘The Lord is my shepherd.’” My mother once showed me a small New Testament kept by my father during the Korean War. In the back was the 23rd Psalm. We will never know how many of our men and women in the armed forces have found comfort in the words of this Psalm. I am thankful that by God’s grace, I have never found myself in such a circumstance.

These words of comfort are there for you 24 hours a day. They are yours in the morning, at noon, and at night. Use them often.

The Good Shepherd has laid down His life for the sheep. Because of Him, we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Prayer: O Shepherd of my soul, grant me the comfort of your green pastures and still waters. Restore my soul and lead me in the path of righteousness. Let your rod and staff remove all fear from me when I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Thank you for the goodness and mercy granted to me all the days of my life and at the end bring me to Your house where I may dwell forever. Amen.

Thursday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day Revelation 22:17

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” Let the one who hears say, “Come.” Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. Alleluia. 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.

Isaiah 25:6–9

⁶On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

⁷And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.

⁸He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

⁹It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

I have read these words many times. It is one of the suggested readings from the Old Testament to be used for a funeral. It has much to offer us in times of distress and trouble.

Isaiah declares that God’s great banquet feast is for all peoples. No race or nationality will prevent you from enjoying God’s salvation.

I have most often read these words from the NIV translation of the Bible, “On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations.” (Isaiah 25:7 NIV). These words prepare us for verse 8 where we learn that God, the LORD of hosts, swallows up death forever! He did this when Jesus defeated sin, death, and the devil on the cross of Calvary.

As a result, the Lord God wipes every tear from all faces! At this wonderful truth, let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.

The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done

Lutheran Service Book 464, Lutheran Worship 143, The Lutheran Hymnal 210
Stanzas 1 & 2

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

- 1 The strife is o'er, the battle done;
Now is the victor's triumph won;
Now be the song of praise begun.
Alleluia!
- 2 The pow'rs of death have done their worst,
But Christ their legions hath dispersed.
Let shouts of holy joy outburst.
Alleluia!

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Prayer: O Lord, as we await the great banquet of heaven grant us the peace and joy of knowing the salvation won for us by Your only-begotten Son. Amen.

Friday

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

Verse of the Day Revelation 22:17

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” Let the one who hears say, “Come.” Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. Alleluia. 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 4:4–13

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about

these things. ⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. ¹¹Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹²I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

As is so often the case, our lessons each week present us with a vast treasure that can never be exhausted. While we focus mainly on the Gospel lesson, these words of St. Paul from Philippians should be on our hearts and minds each day:

Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, Rejoice!

Let Our Gladness Have No End

Lutheran Service Book 381, Lutheran Worship 69, The Lutheran Hymnal 86

Stanza 1

1 Let our gladness have no end, alleluia!
For to earth did Christ descend, alleluia!

ref On this day God gave us
Christ, His Son, to save us;
Christ, His Son, to save us.

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Our earthly joy is often corrupted by anxiety and fear. Paul prescribes the antidote—prayer. He says, “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.”

The result of casting your cares upon the Lord in prayer is “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding.” This peace will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus so that you can rejoice always!

Prayer: O Lord, thank you for the peace that surpasses all understanding. Grant that anxiety and fear will not steal from me the joy of Your salvation given freely in Christ. Amen.

Saturday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day Revelation 22:17

L Alleluia, Alleluia. The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” Let the one who hears say, “Come.” Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. Alleluia. 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.

Philippians 4:8-9

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

These words from our Epistle lesson often take a back seat to the previous verses concerning rejoicing and peace. Yet they also ought to hold prominence in our lives.

During this time of electioneering, we are exposed to much that is not honorable, pure, lovely, or commendable. As God's people, let us not allow ourselves to be caught up in that which is less than honorable.

As we see our nation in turmoil and conflict, it is too easy to let it dominate our lives. Pause for a moment and think of things that are honorable, just, pure, lovely, and commendable. Think of things that are excellent and praiseworthy. We know that the perfect example of these things is Jesus!

God grants us His peace when we think of and practice them! When we fail, He grants us forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

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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