

The Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

The Second-last Sunday of the Church Year

November 16, 2025

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

Lutheran Service Book 873, Lutheran Worship 480, The Lutheran Hymnal 359



1 Christ, whose glo - ry fills the skies, Christ, the true and on - ly light,
2 Dark and cheer-less is the morn Un - ac - com - pa-nied by Thee;
3 Vis - it then this soul of mine, Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;



Sun of righ-teous-ness, a-rise; Tri-umph o'er the shades of night.
Joy-less is the day's re-turn Till Thy mer-cy's beams I see,
Fill me, ra-dian-cy di-vine, Scat-ter all my un-be-lief;



Day-spring from on high, be near; Day-star, in my heart ap-pear.
Till they in-ward light im-part, Glad my eyes, and warm my heart.
More and more Thy-self dis-play, Shin-ing to the per-fect day.

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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 121:1–2, 5, 7–8; antiphon Luke 21:33

- L** Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will not pass away.
- C** **I lift up my eyes to the hills.**
From where does my help come?
- L** My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
- C** **The Lord is your keeper;**
the Lord is your shade on your right hand.
- L** The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
- C** **The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in**
from this time forth and for- evermore.
- 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** Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will not pass away.

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 ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may live and abide forever in Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

Malachi 4:1–6

¹“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ²But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall

go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts. ⁴“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and just decrees that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

⁵“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual Revelation 7:14; Psalm 84:5

L These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

C **They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

L Blessed are those whose strength is in you,

C **in whose heart are the highways to Zion.**

Psalm 98

L ¹Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

C ²**The LORD has made known his salvation;**
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

L ³He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

C ⁴**Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!**

L ⁵Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody!

C ⁶**With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!**

L ⁷Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it!

C ⁸**Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together**

L ⁹before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

C **He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.**

2 Thessalonians 3:6–13

⁶Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.

¹⁰For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ¹¹For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹²Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

¹³As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Luke 21:28b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Straighten up and raise your heads, Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. Because your redemption is drawing near. Alleluia.

Luke 21:5–28

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 20th chapter.
- C** Glory to You, O Lord.

⁵While some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, [Jesus] said, ⁶“As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” ⁷And they asked him, “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?” ⁸And he said, “See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. ⁹And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.”

¹⁰Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. ¹²But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake. ¹³This will be your opportunity to bear witness. ¹⁴Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, ¹⁵for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. ¹⁷You will be hated by all for my name’s sake. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By your endurance you will gain your lives.

²⁰“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. ²¹Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, ²²for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. ²³Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. ²⁴They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

²⁵“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

- 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

The Day Is Surely Drawing Near

Lutheran Service Book 508, Lutheran Worship 462, The Lutheran Hymnal 611



1 The day is sure - ly draw - ing near When Je - sus, God's a - noint - ed,
2 The fi - nal trum - pet then shall sound And all the earth be shak - en,
3 The books are o - pened then to all, A rec - ord tru - ly tell - ing
4 Then woe to those who scorned the Lord And sought but car - nal plea - sures,



In all His pow - er shall ap - pear As judge whom God ap -
And all who rest be - neath the ground Shall from their sleep a -
What each has done, both great and small, When he on earth was
Who here de - spised His pre - cious Word And loved their earth - ly



point - ed. Then fright shall ban - ish i - dle mirth, And flames on
wak - en. But all who live will in that hour, By God's al -
dwell - ing, And ev - 'ry heart be clear - ly seen, And all be
trea - sures! With shame and trem - bling they will stand And at the



flames shall rav - age earth As Scrip - ture long has warned us.
might - y, bound - less pow'r, Be changed at His com - mand - ing.
known as they have been In thoughts and words and ac - tions.
judg - e's stern com - mand To Sa - tan be de - liv - ered.

5 My Savior paid the debt I owe
And for my sin was smitten;
Within the Book of Life I know
My name has now been written.
I will not doubt, for I am free,
And Satan cannot threaten me;
There is no condemnation!

6 May Christ our intercessor be
And through His blood and merit
Read from His book that we are free
With all who life inherit.
Then we shall see Him face to face,
With all His saints in that blest place
Which He has purchased for us.

7 O Jesus Christ, do not delay,
But hasten our salvation;
We often tremble on our way
In fear and tribulation.
O hear and grant our fervent plea:
Come, mighty judge, and set us free
From death and ev'ry evil.

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Devotional thoughts:

I'm happy that we have the right and privilege of choosing our leaders and expressing our opinions on important matters of public policy. But I must confess that I'm tired of politics.

I generally do not like controversy and disagreements but there is one compelling issue that I cannot ignore. It is something that affects every one of us. There are those in the mainstream media along with big-money donors who have taken sides in the debate.

Did you enjoy an extra hour of sleep last Sunday? Did you regret having one morning of the year when you could begin the day in a more leisurely way? It may surprise you to know that there are forces at work in our country that want to take that away from you!

Not only do some people want to end the semi-annual changing of our clocks. They want to make daylight savings time permanent. The government wants to take an hour from you in the spring and never give it back! In fact, the Sunshine Protection Act would do just that and it passed the U.S. Senate on March 15, 2022!

Of course, I present this little bit of rhetoric "tongue in cheek." I don't want to offend anyone by being flippant or insincere. But I do want to make the point that the way we understand and use time is very important.

Some of us more seasoned citizens may have noticed a similar disruption to our Church Year introduced with Lutheran Service Book. In the calendar presented in our previous hymnal, Lutheran Worship, today would not be the Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost. Instead, it would have been designated, the Second-last Sunday of the Church Year!

I'm sure most people would consider my tirade about daylight savings time to be silly. Even more would judge my comments about the Church Year to be uncalled for. Nevertheless, I would be glad to defend myself on both points but for now, let's just consider the Church calendar.

In the old way of counting, the last three Sundays of the Church Year were designated, third-last, second-last, and Last Sunday of the Church Year. They gave us a warning that the end was coming so that it wouldn't catch us off guard and unprepared. This is exactly the reason that Jesus spoke the words of our Gospel lesson for today. He didn't want the end of all things to catch us off guard and unprepared.

Let me set the stage. Jesus' words recorded in Luke 21 were not spoken in the late fall with winter approaching. They occurred when it was spring and Jesus was teaching in the temple

His week began with people waving palm branches and shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:9; Luke 19:38). He then entered the temple courts and drove out the money changers and those who sold pigeons saying, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers" (Matthew 21:12; Luke 19:25). From

that time on He was confronted by the chief priests, the scribes, the elders, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees (Luke 20; Matthew 22). His authority was challenged. He was ambushed by a question about paying taxes. They sought to trap Him with a question about the resurrection of the dead and a widow whose seven husbands died each in turn. They wanted nothing more than to destroy Him.

Shortly after our Gospel lesson for today, Jesus observed the Passover with His disciples, instituted the Lord's Supper, experienced the agony of His soul in the Garden of Gethsemane, was arrested by the High Priest, stood trial under Pontius Pilate, suffered, and died on the cross. It is not surprising that Jesus turned His thoughts to the end and conclusion of all things. He had a heartfelt desire to warn His disciples about the dangers ahead.

Of course, His disciples were not aware of His impending death. Basking in Jesus' popularity with the people, they remarked on the spectacular beauty of the temple. It was world-famous for its splendor. The 150-foot-tall temple looked like it would stand forever.

To their starry-eyed dreaming, Jesus spoke these prophetic words of reality, "As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." The days will come! Things will change. Even God's holy temple will come to an end. This magnificent building will come tumbling down like the walls of Jericho! It all began when the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom as Jesus breathed His last and gave up His spirit on the cross (Matthew 27:51). The work was completed by the Roman legions in A.D. 70. Jesus' prophecy of no stone being left upon another was so completely fulfilled that to this day no one is certain exactly where the once magnificent temple stood.

The destruction of the temple was like the second-last Sunday of the Church Year. The end would not come at once but it stood as a warning that the day was coming!

Jesus then gave them an even more important warning. Charlatans, impostors, fakes, and frauds would come. They would claim to speak in His name. Some would even claim to be Him!

On this Second-last Sunday of the Church Year, we need to hear this warning more than ever. There was once a time in my youth when we gladly heard the pastor's warning about false doctrine and false teachers. Today, few people are willing to hear any talk about the truth of God's word. They eagerly accept every trendy notion of counterfeit morality.

The next warning issued by Jesus was about the persecution that Christians would endure. Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled soon after His ascension into heaven when Peter and John were arrested (Acts 4:1-20; Acts 5:17-42). Stephen became the first martyr (Acts 7). John's brother, James became the first apostle to be executed (Acts 12:1-4).

Two weeks ago, we celebrated the Reformation. You may recall that in April of 1521, Martin Luther was summoned to the Diet of Worms to stand before the most powerful man in Europe, Charles V Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. You may not know that he was also the king of Spain and Lord of the Netherlands. He ruled southern Italy and Austria. His empire included the Spanish colonies in North and South America. This was clearly a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy, "You will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake" (Luke 21:12). Jesus promised, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict" (Luke 21:15). At the conclusion of Luther's powerful witness fulfilled that prophecy. He spoke these words, "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen."

On this Second-last Sunday of the Church Year, we continue to witness the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy. Even in our once-Christian nation, God's people are challenged to remain faithful to Jesus and His word. We are in those days that Jesus said would come.

Finally, Jesus assured us that when the end comes, it will not be a time to dread or fear. It will be a time to raise your head because your redemption is drawing near!

In our Gospel lesson for this week, we should find these important truths.

1. Our time is in God's hands. It is not controlled by government authorities or media personalities.
2. The days will come when our present circumstances will change. Nothing is permanent in this world. We must make good use of our time to prepare for eternity.
3. We must heed Jesus' warning that people around us will oppose the truth of His word. They will seek to deceive us. They will persecute us.

4. Although things may seem dreadful, appalling, and out of control. Jesus has already won the victory for us on the cross. He is already raised from the dead. Difficult times should encourage us to remember that our salvation is drawing near.

Though devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill;
They shall not overpow'r us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none.
He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.

A Mighty Fortress is Our God, stanza 3
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Finally, an optional reading for this Sunday includes Luke 21:33. Here Jesus promised, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

I don't know if you will be upset if our observance of daylight savings time changes. You may or may not fret about changes in the Church Year. All of this will eventually change. From the most significant to the most trivial, the days are coming when none of it will matter.

Heaven and earth will pass away. There is no doubt. But Jesus' words and promises will never pass away. The Apostle Paul's words to the Romans will always be true:

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:31-39).

Or as Martin Luther put it:

The Word they still shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With His good gifts and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Though these all be gone,
Our vict'ry has been won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

A Mighty Fortress is Our God, stanza 4
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“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

Prayers

L O Lord, in these last days we lift our eyes to Your Son, Jesus Christ, from whom our help comes. Turn us from distress and fear of what is coming on our world to stand confidently in the Word of Christ, which will never pass away.

C Amen.

L We worship You, O Lord, for all Your loving kindness shown to us in Christ, our Savior. Deliver us from fear as we witness the signs of the times and make sober judgment in the face of so many vexing concerns. Remind us that though the nations rage and the powers press against the Church, this is our opportunity to give witness to the Word that does not change and the mercy that is our hope in Christ.

C Amen.

L Lord God, we have this command that we are to be busy at work and not walk in idleness. Strengthen us in the Lord Jesus Christ to not grow weary in well doing. Bless the homes and businesses of Your people, that they may gladly receive the fruits of their labors. Grant that, in all our activities, our hearts may always be directed to the love of God and the steadfastness of Christ.

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 O Lord, You are the strength of Your people. Grant that we may not give into temptation or be caught up in evil but endure through Your grace to the day of Christ’s return. We pray that we would be found holy and blameless by the power of His grace when You bring the dawn of the Last Day and lead us into the place where there is no night, no darkness and no death.

C Amen.

L Blessed Lord, You have promised never to abandon us and to provide all that we need for this day and for eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, hear the prayers of Your people, and grant them all good things for Your mercy’s sake. To You, the eternal God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be glory 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.

Abide, O Dearest Jesus

Lutheran Service Book 919, Lutheran Worship 287, The Lutheran Hymnal 53



1 A - bid - e, O dear - est Je - sus, A - mong us with Your grace
2 A - bid - e, O dear Re - deem - er, A - mong us with Your Word,
3 A - bid - e with heav'n - ly bright - ness A - mong us, pre - cious Light;
4 A - bid - e with rich - est bless - ings A - mong us, boun - teous Lord;



That Sa - tan may not harm us Nor we to sin give place.
And thus now and here - af - ter True peace and joy af - ford.
Your truth di - rect and keep us From er - ror's gloom - y night.
Let us in grace and wis - dom Grow dai - ly through Your Word.

5 Abide with Your protection
Among us, Lord, our strength,
Lest world and Satan fell us
And overcome at length.

6 Abide, O faithful Savior,
Among us with Your love;
Grant steadfastness and help us
To reach our home above.

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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 Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost The Second-last Sunday of the Church Year November 17—22, 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.
- C** Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 21:28b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Straighten up and raise your heads, Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. Because your redemption is drawing near. Alleluia.

Introit Psalm 121:1–2, 5, 7–8; antiphon Luke 21:33

- L** Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will not pass away.
- C** I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
- L** My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
- C** The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade on your right hand.
- L** The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
- C** The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and for- evermore.
- 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** Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will not pass away.

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.

How do you think humanity will come to an end? In 1947, the cover of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* displayed a Doomsday Clock set at “seven minutes to midnight.” This served as a warning that the world would soon end in annihilation caused by a nuclear war. In the 1950s and 60s, this worry dominated much of American society. It was featured in movies, such as *Fail Safe*, *Thunderball*, and the like. I have never lived a day in my life without this threat.

The 20th Century also was plagued by paranoia that earth would be invaded by aliens from outer space. The mass hysteria generated by Orson Welles’ Halloween radio adaptation of H. G. Wells’ novel *The War of the Worlds* is evidence of this fear.

During my college years, we were frightened that the world would end in overpopulation and mass starvation. In 1969, a well-known *Star Trek* episode titled “The Mark of Gideon” played on that fear.

The Covid-19 pandemic underscored the concern that civilization will end with an uncontrollable disease. Before Covid-19 came upon the scene, films were made about Ebola. Sometimes we can combine our fears of catastrophic destruction as was done in the film, *The Andromeda Strain*, which featured the outbreak of a deadly extraterrestrial microorganism.

I’m sure you are aware of the two popular 21st scenarios for the end of humanity. It is almost impossible to watch a newscast without hearing some mention of the threat of man-made global warming. We also regularly are reminded of the need to invest in protecting the world from a deadly asteroid impact.

If these are not enough for you to consider, we have two political parties that point at each other as a threat to humanity. It’s enough to make me lose my appetite.

All of these scenarios have one thing in common. They all agree with Jesus. Heaven and earth will pass away.

Of course, the Bible tells us that God has reserved for Himself the right to bring our present creation to an end. He intends to replace it with a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1).

But one thing is certain, heaven and earth will pass away but Jesus’ words will not pass away. His promises always hold true. In the face of every danger or threat, our help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

In all likelihood, I will not live to see the end of the world. However,

I am Jesus’ little lamb,
Ever glad at heart I am;
For my Shepherd gently guides me,
Knows my need and well provides me,
Loves me ev’ry day the same,
Even calls me by my name.

Day by day, at home, away,
Jesus is my staff and stay.
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me,
Into pleasant pastures leads me;
When I thirst, He bids me go
Where the quiet waters flow.

Who so happy as I am,
Even now the Shepherd’s lamb?
And when my short life is ended,
By His angel host attended,
He shall fold me to His breast,
There within His arms to rest.

L Let us pray. O Lord, in You we take refuge. Grant that we may always have a joyful spirit in times of trouble as we look forward to the day when You will rescue us for all eternity from the dangers of this present creation through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Tuesday

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

Verse of the Day: Luke 21:28b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Straighten up and raise your heads, Alleluia.
G Alleluia, Alleluia. Because your redemption is drawing near. 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: O Lord, almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may live and abide forever in Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever
G Amen.

While we may talk about the world coming to an end, you and I will not come to an end. When God created humanity in His image, He imparted to us souls that will continue into eternity. Our eternities will be either spent with our loving God or totally separated from Him and all goodness.

We don't deserve to live with God for eternity. Our lives of sin are lives of rebellion against God and His will. Because of this, we have no right to demand a place in heaven forever with God.

But thanks be to God. He put His plan of salvation into place to open the Kingdom of Heaven to us and all believers. His plan required His Son to take our place and suffer the punishment for sin that we deserve.

The exceedingly great and precious promise God gives is that whoever believes in His Son will not perish but have eternal life. We pray in the collect that the Holy Spirit would keep us in the faith by ruling and governing our hearts and minds so that we would live and abide forever with Him in heaven.

Prayer: O Lord, almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may live and abide forever in Your Son, 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.
G Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 21:28b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Straighten up and raise your heads, Alleluia.
G Alleluia, Alleluia. Because your redemption is drawing near. Alleluia.

Psalm 98

- L** ¹Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.
- C** ²**The LORD has made known his salvation;
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.**
- L** ³He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
- C** ⁴**Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!**
- L** ⁵Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody!
- C** ⁶**With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!**
- L** ⁷Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it!
- C** ⁸**Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together**
- L** ⁹before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.
- C** **He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.**

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 98 is one of my favorite psalms. A paraphrase of verse 1 serves as the refrain for the much-loved hymn by Herbert Brokering, “Earth and All Stars” (Hymn 817 in Lutheran Service Book and 438 in Lutheran Worship).

Not everyone appreciates this hymn. Many years ago an older woman who was very faithful in church and Bible class explained to me that she didn’t like this hymn because “inanimate objects cannot praise God.” In one sense, she was right. They cannot articulate praise to God in the same way that we can. However, in verse 8, the psalmist declares that “the rivers clap their hands” and “the hills sing for joy” in praise to God.

During my doctoral studies, I took a class on hymnody. All of the students in the class were actively serving as pastors of congregations. We all were engaged in worship planning and hymn selection. One of the pastors boldly proclaimed that he and his organist had gone through the hymnal and placed a big red X over hymns that they would never select. He then said that “Earth and All Stars” was a hymn with an X. When I asked him why, he explained that it didn’t clearly articulate God’s plan of salvation in Christ.

I must admit that it would have been nice if the hymn included the second half of verse 1, “His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.” However, God’s work of salvation is there for any who care to look.

First, it is found in the phrase, “He has done marvelous things.” Only God can do marvelous and wonderful things! Everything we do is ordinary and commonplace. The Hebrew word translated as “marvelous things” is also translated as “wonders” in Exodus 3:20. It describes the miraculous activities of God in rescuing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It is used again in Joshua 3:5 to describe God’s action in bringing His people into the Promised Land across the Jordan River. It is used again in Nehemiah 9:17 to describe all of God’s gracious acts in delivering His people from Egypt and caring for them during their time in the wilderness.

We encounter this word again in 1 Peter 2:9-10:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

But even more striking is this phrase, “Sing to the LORD a new song.” The “new song” is not a “newly

composed song.” It is not a call to rid the world of old tired hymns and replace them with modern, fashionable, and up-to-date poetry.

No, the “old song” is the song of sin and death. It is the song of mourning and sadness. Only God can put an end to that “old song” through the saving work of His Chosen One, Jesus Christ!

The “new song” is the song of forgiveness and salvation. It is the song of victory over sin, death, and the devil. This is the song of heaven! It is sung in Revelation 5:8-14:

⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.”

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

We sing this “new song” of heaven in church when we sing the canticle “This Is the Feast” (Lutheran Service Book, page 155).

Prayer: O Lord God, heavenly Father, You have ransomed us by the blood of our savior Jesus. Move our hearts to sing Your praises with the new song of salvation. 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 21:28b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Straighten up and raise your heads, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. Because your redemption is drawing near. 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.

Malachi 4:1–6

¹“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ²But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts. ⁴“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and just decrees that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

⁵“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

Our lesson from Malachi is the last chapter of the Old Testament. It begins, “Behold, the day is coming.” God’s work and message did not end with the Old Testament. Malachi not only looked to the future and saw God’s judgment upon the “arrogant and all evildoers,” he also pointed to the coming savior when he said, “the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.”

God’s judgment and salvation are always closely linked. They are not fully realized yet but they are coming.

Like Malachi, Jesus also warned that “the days will come.” There will be judgment for those who reject Him but for those who love and trust in Him, there will be salvation. When we see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory, we will rejoice that our redemption is drawing near.

Both the Old and the New Testaments speak of God’s wrath and judgment. But believers have nothing to fear. When we see judgment coming, we know that the Sun of Righteousness has healing in His wings for every sinner who turns to Him in faith. May we never fear the days to come but trust in God’s grace revealed to us in His Son, Jesus.

Prayer: O Lord God, thank you for the gift of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Grant that we may remain faithful to You until the day when this world comes to its end and we see Jesus coming in great power and glory to take us to be with Him forever in the mansions of heaven, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Friday

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

Verse of the Day: Luke 21:28b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Straighten up and raise your heads, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. Because your redemption is drawing near. Alleluia.

Kyrie

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

2 Thessalonians 3:6–13

⁶Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ¹¹For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹²Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

¹³As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

As we go through the propers each week, examining the lessons, the introit, the collect, gradual, and verse, I try to demonstrate how they relate to one another and the theme for the particular day in the Church Year. I have to admit that 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 has me stumped. I am not sure why it was chosen for this week even though it is the Epistle lesson in the Roman Catholic Lectionary, the Revised Common Lectionary (used in many protestant churches), and Lutheran Service Book.

I cannot figure out how it relates to the Second-last Sunday of the Church Year. But here is my best guess. While we are preparing for Christ's return, we must continue to be faithful to Christ in our daily lives and activities.

Karl Marx popularized the utopian principle, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Starry-eyed idealists have often embraced this unworkable quest. However, Karl Marx and other 19th Century socialist thinkers weren't the first to promote this basic principle of communism. The first Believers following the Day of Pentecost practiced Christian communism. It is recorded in Acts 4:32, "Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common."

The first Christians quickly learned that sinful human nature will always make this program unworkable. The "needs" of fraudulent and corrupt individuals will overwhelm even the most selfless generosity of the truly faithful. The communist governments of the 20th Century did not operate on the principle of generosity. They survived for a while by forcing people to conform.

Charity and generosity as we know them in contemporary society began with the Christian Church. Social services, hospitals, etc. are legacies of our Christian culture. But the temptation to abuse Christian charity and generosity has always been with us. This is the subject of the first portion of our Epistle lesson.

The Apostle Paul concluded his second letter to the Thessalonians with a warning against idleness. People who can work ought to work and not be a burden to the rest of the believers. He adds this command to his warning, "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). [I must confess my preference for the King James translation of this verse, "if any would not work, neither should he eat."]

Apparently, many individuals in the church were preying upon the generosity of the faithful. Paul could not let that continue. Every fraudulent claim for assistance robbed those who were truly in need. Paul was not being heartless. He expected that widows, orphans, and those with infirmities should continue to be cared for. However, the able-bodied should not be a burden on the church.

As we await Christ's return to take us to be with Him forever in heaven, let us continue our daily activities of providing for our needs through honest work and industry.

Prayer: Almighty God, thank You for the ability to work with our hands and minds to provide for ourselves daily bread. Grant us truly generous hearts to help those who are truly in need. Give us joy in generosity and practicing charity as Jesus was truly generous with us in sharing the richness of His grace and mercy. 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 21:28b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Straighten up and raise your heads, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. Because your redemption is drawing near. Alleluia.

Gradual Revelation 7:14; Psalm 84:5

L These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

C They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

L Blessed are those whose strength is in you,

C in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

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 Thessalonians 3:13

¹³As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

2 Thessalonians 3:13 is the second of two famous Bible passages in our Epistle lesson for this week. The first one is 2 Thessalonians 3:10 KJV, “If any would not work, neither should he eat.” Again, I prefer the King James Version and Revised Standard Version for this passage, “Do not be weary in well-doing.”

I can understand why the ESV prefers “doing good” to “well doing.” In recent years, Americans have developed a pronounced dislike for adverbs. We no longer are urged to drive “safely.” Everyone now is told to “drive safe.” For many years, I have jokingly given the compliment, “You done good” knowing that it was an atrocious grammatical blunder. I’m afraid that today when I say that phrase, people accept it as a correct and proper complement.

Back to “doing good” versus “well doing,” even the grammar checker on my word processor wants me to change “doing good” to “doing well.” Disregarding the fact that the literal translation of the Greek word here (*kalopoieó*) is “well doing,” there is another subtle but important difference between these two translations.

“Doing good” implies that the Apostle is encouraging us to do “good works.” It suggests that he wants us to seek out good deeds to do. It’s as though Paul is telling us all to become the Tin Man from the Wizard of Oz. As the Wizard was about to award him the testimonial heart, he declared, “Back where I come from, there are men who do nothing all day but good deeds. They are called phila...er ... phila...er, good deed doers.”

But this is not what Paul means when he says, “Be not weary in well doing.” He is encouraging us to be like Jesus. The people said of Jesus, “He has done all things well” (Mark 7:37). He expects every action of a believer to be in tune with Jesus’ way of living and doing things. He is not encouraging us to rack up a list of good deeds.

The other keyword in this verse is “weary.” It indicates an inner weariness, exhaustion, or loss of spirit. Paul is concerned that some believers will abandon their faith.

There may be times when you do become weary in well-doing. Sin weighs us all down. Those are times when we need to hear again Jesus’ invitation, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:27-29 NASB1995).

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for the gift of Your Spirit who enables us to live noble lives of faith. Grant us the desire and ability to lead god-pleasing lives through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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