

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

February 19, 2023

We have reached the zenith of the Epiphany season. Christ stands upon the mountain peak and reveals His majesty as true God, giving His disciples a glimpse of His power and glory before He goes down the mountain to suffer and die for the sins of all mankind. We, too, will one day see our Savior with unveiled eyes when we enter heaven. Until that day we live on the plain, our hearts eager to see His awesome majesty. We remember His promise, "Lo, I am with you always."

Alleluia! Let Praises Ring

Lutheran Service Book 822, Lutheran Worship 437, The Lutheran Hymnal 23



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Let prais - es ring! To God the Fa -
2 Al - le - lu - ia! Let prais - es ring! Un - to the Lamb
3 Al - le - lu - ia! Let prais - es ring! Un - to the Ho -
4 Al - le - lu - ia! Let prais - es ring! Un - to our tri -



ther let us bring Our songs of ad - o - ra - tion.
of God we sing, In whom we are e - lect - ed.
ly Ghost we sing For our re - gen - er - a - tion.
une God we sing; Blest be His name for - ev - er!



To Him through ev - er - last - ing days Be wor - ship, hon -
He bought His Church with His own blood, He cleansed her in
The sav - ing faith in us He wrought And us un - to
With an - gel hosts let us a - dore And sing His prais -



or, pow'r, and praise, Whose hand sus - tains cre - a - tion.
that bless - ed flood, And as His bride se - lect - ed.
the Bride-groom brought, Made us His cho - sen na - tion.
es ev - er - more For all His grace and fa - vor!



Sing - ing, ring - ing: Ho - ly, ho - ly, God is ho - ly;
Ho - ly, ho - ly Is our u - nion And com - mu - nion.
Glo - ry! Glo - ry! Joy e - ter - nal, Bliss su - per - nal;
Sing - ing, ring - ing: Ho - ly, ho - ly, God is ho - ly;



Spread the sto - ry Of our God, the Lord of glo - ry.
His be - friend - ing Gives us joy and peace un - end - ing.
There is man - na And an end - less, glad ho - san - na.
Spread the sto - ry Of our God, the Lord of glo - ry!

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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 99:1–5; antiphon Psalm 99:9

L Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain;
for the Lord our God is holy!

C The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble!
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

L The Lord is great in Zion;
he is exalted over all the peoples.

C Let them praise your great and awesome name!
Holy is he!

L The King in his might loves justice.
You have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

C Exalt the Lord our God; worship at his footstool!
Holy is he!

- 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** Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain;
for the Lord our God is holy!

Kyrie

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

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

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

Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

Exodus 24:8–18

⁸And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

⁹Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, ¹⁰and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. ¹¹And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

¹²The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” ¹³So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. ¹⁴And he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. Whoever has a dispute, let him go to them.”

¹⁵Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. ¹⁸Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights

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

Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

- L** Praise the Lord, all nations!
C Extol him, all peoples!
L For great is his steadfast love toward us,
C and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.
L Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
C bring an offering, and come into his courts!

Psalm 2:6–12

- L** ⁶“As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”
C ⁷I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.
L ⁸Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.
C ⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”
L ¹⁰Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.
C ¹¹Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
L ¹²Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled.
C Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

2 Peter 1:16–21

¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

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

Verse of the Day: Psalm 45:2a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are the most handsome of the sons of men; Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia, Grace is poured upon your lips. Alleluia.

Matthew 17:1–9

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 17th chapter.
C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for

Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁵He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” ⁸And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”

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.

'Tis Good, Lord, to Be Here

Lutheran Service Book 414, Lutheran Worship 89, The Lutheran Hymnal 135



1	'Tis	good,	Lord,	to	be	here!	Thy
2	'Tis	good,	Lord,	to	be	here,	Thy
3	Ful	- fill	- er	of	the	past	And
4	Be	- fore	we	taste	of	death,	We
5	'Tis	good,	Lord,	to	be	here!	Yet



glo	- ry	fills	the	night;	Thy	face	and	gar	- ments,
beau	- ty	to	be	- hold	Where	Mo	- ses	and	E
hope	of	things	to	be,	We	hail	Thy	bod	- y
see	Thy	king	- dom	come;	We	long	to	hold	the
we	may	not	re	- main;	But	since	Thou	bidst	us



like the sun, Shine with un - bor - rowed light.
li - jah stand, Thy mes - sen - gers of old.
glo - ri - fied And our re - demp - tion see.
vi - sion bright And make this hill our home.
leave the mount, Come with us to the plain.

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Devotional thoughts:

Oopsie! I've used that exclamation more times than I would like to admit. Most of the time, it's for something quite simple and innocent like sending an email and forgetting to include the attachment that I promised. But today, I'd like to confess to a big OOPSIE!

God blessed me with two wonderful parents. Almost twenty years ago, God called my father home to be with Him. Two years ago, my mother joined him and the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. My brothers, sisters, and I took up the mission of distributing and selling 90 years of accumulated household goods and memories.

I know that this can cause friction in families but I am happy to report that each of us was able to choose items to cherish our parents' memory without disputes or arguing. This was a great blessing. But today, I would like to tell you the story of a chair upholstered with a golden fabric that my mom left behind.

My mother had a little Rat Terrier named Penny. She was a wonderful companion for my mom. Unfortunately, she had one major flaw. She liked to lounge on mom's furniture.

Rat Terriers are champion shedders. Their short white hair covers everything they touch, especially upholstery.

To solve the problem, my mother designated this little golden chair as a place for Penny to sleep. She placed her doggie bed and blankets on the chair and Penny was as happy as a clam.

Even though Valerie had vacuumed and cleaned the chair, none of us children wanted it. We put it in three garage sales at a very low price. Still, there were no takers. Finally, we set it out on the sidewalk and marked it "Free." That strategy worked for many orphan items but nobody wanted our lonely little chair. As the time for selling my mother's house approached, there was nothing left to do but take it to a second-hand store that accepted donations. As we said goodbye to the little golden chair, we thought that we'd never see it again.

Less than a week later, my sister sent me a text with a picture of a chair. She asked, "Is this Mom's chair?" I zoomed in on it and compared it to pictures that I had taken of the chair. Yes, indeed, it was Mom's chair. Several blemishes in the fabric were identical in both pictures.

My sister's text included a link to a website. OOPSIE! There was the little golden chair in all its glory. It was listed for sale as a designer midcentury modern chair. The price was \$2,400! OOPSIE!

None of us had any idea that this little chair was so valuable. My mother wouldn't have allowed Penny to sleep on it if she had known. My sisters and brothers would have gladly taken it. None of the countless visitors to our garage sales recognized its value. But there it was proudly beaming in its newfound glory.

Human pride often deceives us into believing that we are "know-it-alls." No one can convince us of our ignorance. Whether it is sports, political parties or little gold chairs, we all believe, "I am right and you are wrong!" and "No one can change my mind." Most of the time this misguided expertise is harmless. If I make a mistake, it's just an "oopsie." Sometimes a lack of knowledge can be dangerous. But ignorance about Jesus is deadly!

God doesn't want anyone to be ignorant about Jesus. He wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).

During the Epiphany Season, we learned how God revealed the truth about Jesus and His mission of salvation to people living in the darkness of ignorance (Matthew 4:16). It began with the gentile Wise Men being led by a star to the baby in Bethlehem who was born king of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-12). We stood in the Jordan River with John the Baptist as the Spirit of God descended like a dove and came to rest on Jesus. We heard God the Father declare from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:16-17). We learned with John's disciples that Jesus is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). We witnessed Jesus healing every disease and every affliction (Matthew 4:23).

A lot has happened since then in the life of Jesus. He went throughout Galilee teaching in the towns and synagogues proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23). He preached His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). He calmed the winds and the waves (Matthew 8:26). He raised Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:40-48). He fed the five thousand (Matthew 14:13-21) and walked on water (Matthew 14:22-23).

Six days ago, Jesus was in the region of Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:13) in far northern Galilee. Caesarea Philippi was known for a temple complex dedicated to the pagan god Pan. It also had a temple dedicated to Caesar Augustus built by Herod the Great. When Jesus was there, it was a large city dedicated to Tiberius Caesar.

Few other places in the Holy Land were less informed about the true God and His Son. It was here that Jesus posed the question, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Matthew 16:13). It's not surprising that they were unaware of who He really was. Some believed that He was John the Baptist. Others thought that He was Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. OOPSIE!

Then Jesus asked His disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter knew what the people of Caesarea Philippi were ignorant of. He boldly answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16).

But it turns out that Peter wasn't as well informed as he thought he was. Matthew records, "From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Matthew 16:21). Jesus revealed to them God's full and complete plan of salvation.

The "know-it-all" Peter quickly took Jesus aside to set Him straight. He told Jesus, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you" (Matthew 16:22).

Peter wasn't much different than any of us. From time to time, most of us believe that our plans are better than God's plans. We are willing to take Him aside and set Him straight. But we should remember that when we oppose God, we have joined the camp of the enemy.

Jesus didn't mix any words when He was confronted by Peter's ignorance. He bluntly told Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man" (Matthew 16:23).

Peter must have responded well to Jesus' no-nonsense admonishment because He was included with James and John on a private field trip to the top of the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus would reveal to this trio exactly who He is! He would push back the darkness of ignorance from their minds. They would see with their own eyes what it meant that Jesus is the Son of God. This experience so transformed Peter that years later he would write, "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,' we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain" (2 Peter 1:16-18).

On this Transfiguration Sunday, we stand with Peter, James, and John. We see Jesus' face shine like the Sun and His clothes becoming as bright as light. We, too, hear the voice from the cloud say, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." (Matthew 17:5).

We cannot claim ignorance about who Jesus is. He's God's own beloved Son who came into the world to save sinners through His dying and rising. The light of God's word tells us who Jesus is and what He has done for our salvation. We know that Jesus went to Jerusalem and suffered many things on our behalf. We know that He was killed on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, and on the third day, He was raised from the dead for our salvation.

We live in a world where many people are willfully ignorant about Jesus. This ignorance is not just an oopsie. It is an ignorance that leads to eternal death and separation from God.

The Epiphany Season began with the light of a star shining in the east and guiding the Wise Men to Jesus. It ends with Jesus' face shining like the sun on top of the Mount of Transfiguration.

By the working of the Holy Spirit through the word, we have come to know that Jesus is:

“God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.”

More than that, we know that:

“for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.

And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.”

Peter, James, and John could not stay on the Mount of Transfiguration. They were compelled to walk with Him to Jerusalem where they heard the crowds shout, “Hosanna.” They witness Judas betray Him with a kiss and the soldiers take Him away. They experienced the tragedy and heartbreak of Good Friday.

We, too, are compelled to walk with Jesus throughout the next weeks of this coming Lenten Season. We will hear the crowds yell, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” We will hear Jesus pray, “Father, forgive them,” and “It is finished.”

But early on Easter morning, we will hasten to the tomb to hear the angel declare, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay” (Matthew 28:5-6).

But this is not the end. Peter, James, and John could not but speak of what they had seen and heard (Acts 4:20). They couldn't allow people to live in the darkness of ignorance when they knew that Jesus was the life and light of all mankind (John 1:4).

Now in our generation, we have been entrusted with this valuable message. It is worth much more than \$2,400. It is priceless. It is the light of eternal life granted to us through faith in Jesus.

Now it is our turn to push back the darkness of ignorance about Jesus and God's plan of salvation so that others can see Jesus for who He really is—God's beloved Son who was given to us so that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life!

“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 Heavenly Father, You revealed Your glory in the transfiguration of Your Son. Open our eyes, that by faith we would see Him more clearly through Your word. Grant that we would heed Your instruction to “listen to Him.”

C Amen.

L Holy God, we ask for Your blessing on our congregations, especially for all those preparing for confirmation. May we behold Your glory in the salvation that You have granted to us through faith in Christ. May we also be transformed and be given the boldness to share Your glory with all who You send our way.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, Moses and Elijah appeared with our Savior in glory. They gave witness to the fact that the Law and the prophets speak about Him. Grant us wisdom to open Your Scriptures in such a way that we would hear the voice of Jesus.

C Amen.

L Heavenly Father, bless our families. Give parents the wisdom and skill to teach the faith to their children and that the forgiveness of sins would be found in all our homes.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, give our leaders wisdom for the challenges ahead. Send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. Grant healing according to Your will to those who suffer any injury or disease.

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.

From All That Dwell Below the Skies

Lutheran Service Book 816, Lutheran Worship 440, The Lutheran Hymnal 15



1 From all that dwell be - low the skies	Let the Cre - a - tor's
2 E - ter - nal are Thy mer - cies, Lord;	E - ter - nal truth at -
3 All praise to God the Fa - ther be,	All praise, e - ter - nal



praise a - rise;	Al - le - lu - ia,	al - le - lu - ia!
tends Thy Word.	Al - le - lu - ia,	al - le - lu - ia!
Son, to Thee.	Al - le - lu - ia,	al - le - lu - ia!



Let the Re - deem - er's name be sung Through ev - 'ry land by
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore Till suns shall rise and
Whom with the Spir - it we a - dore For - ev - er and for -



ev - 'ry tongue. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
set no more. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
ev - er - more: Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

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Farewell to Alleluia

Today we have reached a turning point in the Church Year. We leave the Christmas season and look forward to Easter. Before we can rightly celebrate Easter we will experience the forty days of spiritual renewal called "Lent." Lent begins this week with Ash Wednesday. So today, Transfiguration Sunday, we put away the singing of "Alleluia." During the season of Lent, we avoid singing "Alleluia" as a way to help us focus on the solemnity of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross for our sins. On Easter morning, when we celebrate our Lord's Resurrection, we will again sing "Alleluia" with joy and thanksgiving.

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 Transfiguration of Our Lord

February 20 – 25, 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.

Introit Psalm 99:1–5; antiphon Psalm 99:9

- L** Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain;
for the Lord our God is holy!
- C** **The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble!**
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!
- L** The Lord is great in Zion;
he is exalted over all the peoples.
- C** **Let them praise your great and awesome name!**
Holy is he!
- L** The King in his might loves justice.
You have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.
- C** **Exalt the Lord our God; worship at his footstool!**
Holy is he!
- 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** Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain;
for the Lord our God is holy!

Verse of the Day: Psalm 45:2a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are the most handsome of the sons of men; Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia, Grace is poured upon your lips. 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. |

One of the great privileges of being a pastor is meeting amazing people. Some of the most amazing people that I met were 7th and 8th-grade confirmation students.

I know that may seem odd to you and I do admit that some of them can be a challenge. However, more often than not, 7th and 8th grade is a time when young people begin to demonstrate their ultimate potential. I have often asked my students to remember their old grey-haired pastor when they become famous and successful adults. Sometimes, they become famous sooner than I would have guessed.

I once had two girls in class who were both outstanding athletes and scholars. After confirmation, they attended two different high schools where they excelled in sports.

One achieved recognition as the top athlete in the state in her sport. In any other year, the second young woman may have received that honor. She was that good!

I thought of these two young women as I read our introit for this week. It is composed of selected verses from Psalm 99. It's a grand psalm but I'm afraid that it doesn't get the recognition that it deserves because it is right next to Psalm 100 which gets all the glory!

Psalm 99 begins "The Lord reigns." Our reigning Lord loves justice and has established equity (verse 4). Because of the amazing things that He does, we exalt Him and worship Him! One way to do this is by singing Psalm 100!

If God did not reign then evil would. But God set in motion a plan to destroy evil and reign in the hearts of His faithful people. Jesus destroyed sin, death, and the devil by His sacrifice on the cross. His kingdom of goodness, justice, and equity exists wherever you find His disciples.

When the Pharisees asked when the Kingdom (or reign) of God would come, Jesus answered, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21 NKJV).

- L** Let us pray. O Lord, thank You for reigning in the hearts and minds of Your faithful people. Let Your kingdom come to more and more people through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. Grant us the peace that comes from knowing that You have given us Your kingdom now in time and fully in eternity through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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: Psalm 45:2a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are the most handsome of the sons of men; Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia, Grace is poured upon your lips. Alleluia.

Kyrie

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Christ, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |

L Let us pray: O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

As I prayed the collect for this week, I was reminded of all the great themes contained in the Transfiguration. They all revolve around Jesus!

Some in our secular society are willing to admit that Jesus was a great teacher. They compare Him to religious leaders of other world religions. In doing so, they foolishly believe that they are paying Him a compliment and that Christians should be pleased with their assessment.

If Jesus were just a man who came to bring us better rules for living a good life, then no one should be a Christian. Christianity is founded on the fact that God sent His own Son to become a human being and receive in our stead the punishment that our sins deserve.

The Transfiguration of Jesus emphasizes this central fact of our faith. He is God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God! His face shines like the sun! God's voice from heaven calls Him his beloved Son! But this happened shortly after Jesus informed His disciples that He was traveling to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and rise again from the dead!

He did all this for us. Peter, James, and John were able to witness Jesus in His transfigured glory on the mountaintop. This is the same glory that we will witness one day when He calls us to spend eternity with Him. This is why the Son of God was born in Bethlehem!

Prayer: O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday Prayer

Gracious Savior I fall at your feet this day as your Church once more enters the Lenten season to meditate upon your passion, by which we have been eternally redeemed.

In spirit I appear before you in sackcloth and ashes in true repentance; let me receive your full pardon. Do not let the pleasures of life, the worries of the day, and the activities of my daily routine crowd You out of my heart and out of my thoughts. Draw me to Your wounded side, and cleanse me with Your most precious blood. Bring healing to my soul and peace to my mind. By Your grace, let me crucify my sinful affections, lusts, and desires. Make me more than a conqueror over every temptation.

I confess to You all my sins. Let none of them cling to me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Teach me to love You more and more. Give me grace to Confess You as my Savior, who has redeemed me on Calvary, lifting me out of the darkness of sin to be Your own. Gracious Savior, let Your constraining love keep me and all God's children steadfast to the end. Amen.

Lutheran Book of Prayer
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L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Psalm 51:1–13

- L** ¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
- C** ²**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!**
- L** ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
- C** ⁴**Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.**
- L** ⁵Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- C** ⁶**Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**
- L** ⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- C** ⁸**Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.**
- L** ⁹Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
- C** ¹⁰**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**
- L** ¹¹Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- C** ¹²**Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.**
- L** ¹³Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
- C** **and sinners will return to you.**

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. |

Joel 2:12–14

- ¹²“Yet even now,” declares the LORD,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³and rend your hearts and not your garments.”
Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;
and he relents over disaster.
- ¹⁴Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for the LORD your God?

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

^{20b}We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1}Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by

great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 9th chapter.

G **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹[Jesus said:] “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

²“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. . . .

¹⁶“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Yesterday was Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday). It was a day of revelry before the somber season of Lent. Strictly speaking, there is nothing inherently wrong with festivities at any time of the year. However, approaching a season of repentance with a party does seem contrary to the spirit and purpose of Lent. Nevertheless, it does illustrate an important point about repentance.

Repentance is not something that can be forced! True repentance comes from the startling recognition of sin and its consequences. This is something that cannot be programmed. It is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Martin Luther calls this the alien or foreign work of the Holy Spirit. The proper work of the Holy Spirit is bringing forgiveness through faith in the Gospel that Jesus is the savior who died for the sins of the world. But before that can happen, the Holy Spirit must convince us of our need for a savior.

King David was fully convinced that his scheming had covered up the consequence of his twin sins of adultery and murder. If God had not sent the prophet Nathan to challenge His unrepentant heart, David would have gone to His grave without true repentance.

By the working of the Holy Spirit through the words of the prophet, David repented. He left us a remembrance of his repentance in Psalms 32 and 51.

Read Psalm 51 again and imagine what David experienced in his heart. As far as possible make his words, your words.

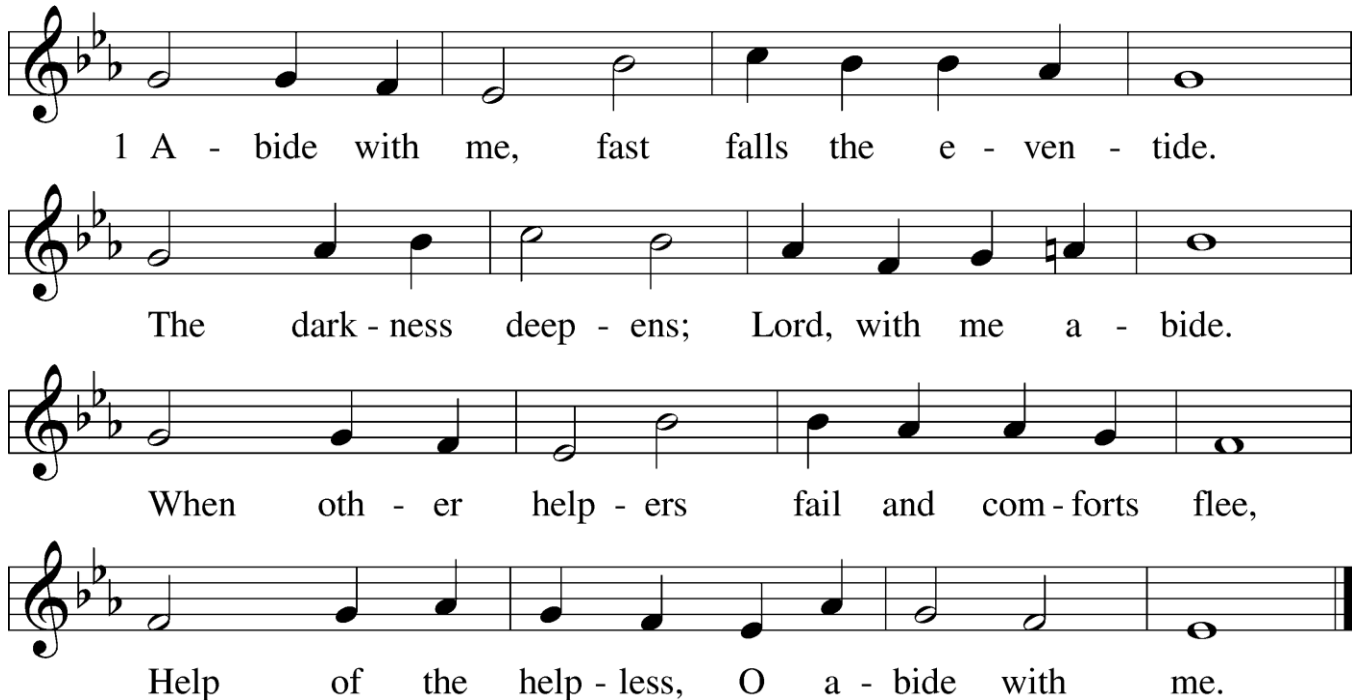
¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy

- blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.
(Psalm 51:1-4; 10-12)

Prayer: Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Abide with Me

Lutheran Service Book 876, Lutheran Worship 490, The Lutheran Hymnal 552
Stanzas 1 & 6



1 A - bide with me, fast falls the e - ven - tide.

The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide.

When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,

Help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.

- 6 Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Thursday

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

Verse of the Day: Psalm 45:2a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are the most handsome of the sons of men; Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia, Grace is poured upon your lips. 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. |

Exodus 24:8–18

⁸And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

⁹Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, ¹⁰and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. ¹¹And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

¹²The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” ¹³So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. ¹⁴And he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. Whoever has a dispute, let him go to them.”

¹⁵Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. ¹⁸Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights

Early in my life, I considered becoming a doctor. It turns out that I don’t like blood so I chose another path! Unfortunately, I didn’t realize how much time pastors spend in hospitals. For a while, I was so familiar with the local Emergency Room that I knew all the shortcuts through the maze of rooms! So naturally, it caught my attention when I read that Moses took blood and threw it on the people (Exodus 24:8).

The Lutheran Study Bible has an interesting note regarding this event (Page xxix). It tells us that blood was used to consecrate the people. Hebrews 9:19 tells us that the blood was diluted with water! Nevertheless, priests and prophets had to deal with blood! That’s not my cup of tea.

Why did the people need to be consecrated? They were preparing to approach the Mountain of God.

We still need to be consecrated to approach God! God has consecrated us with the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. He did this for all people of all time.

Pastors no longer are required to handle blood. However, blood still consecrates Jesus’ people. The sacrifices in the temple have ended because Jesus shed his blood on the cross once for all. We can now come into the presence of God without fear. Ephesians 3:12 (NIV) tells us, “In him (Christ) and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.”

Next, something amazing happened. The chief men of the people of Israel beheld God, and ate and drank (Exodus 24:11). This was a foretaste of the feast in heaven that awaits us and all believers who have been consecrated by the blood of Jesus.

As we enter this Lenten Season, we rejoice to know that the heavenly banquet awaits us. Let us use the

days and weeks ahead to prepare ourselves for that day through repentance and faith.

Prayer: Almighty God, thank You for sending Jesus to make us worthy to enter Your presence. Grant us a full measure of Your Spirit through word and sacrament so that we will use this Lententide to grow in faith and love through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday

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

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Psalm 45:2a

L Alleluia, Alleluia, You are the most handsome of the sons of men; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, Grace is poured upon your lips. 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 Peter 1:16–21

¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

50 years ago, I was finishing my senior year in college. When I entered high school, I signed up for Latin because I knew that Concordia Seminary in St. Louis required German or Latin. My high school didn’t offer German, so my choices were narrowed.

Now eight years later, my goal of attending Concordia Seminary was in sight. There were a few more papers to write and a few exams to take and I would be ready to start my seminary adventure.

But all was not well at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. In order to avoid the brewing storm, a few of my seminary bound classmates changed course and set sail for Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois (now in Ft. Wayne, Indiana). After spending more than a quarter of my life preparing for St. Louis, I was too stubborn to rethink my plans.

Recounting what happened next at Concordia Seminary has already filled several books. Someday, I may organize my thoughts but this isn’t the time or the place. However, over the next four years, several life-changing events happened to me while attending the seminary. Without a doubt, the most significant thing was my marriage to my beloved wife, Valerie. But next to that, my assignment to be a vicar at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Moline and to serve under Pastor Eldor Haake was the most significant.

Honestly, I have very little memory of the day that I opened the envelope with my assignment. But I remember almost everything else about that year. It changed who I was as a person and who I would become as a pastor.

Peter must have thought the same about so many things that happened to him during his three years of

“vicarage” with the Good Shepherd, Jesus. In our epistle lesson, he recounted one of the most significant days in his life. It was the day that he spent on the Mount of Transfiguration. There, he witnessed Jesus in all his Majestic Glory. He heard God, the Father say, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

This experience sustained Peter through the difficult days ahead. It removed all doubt from His mind about who Jesus is.

Now, near the end of his life (2 Peter 1:14, “since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.”), Peter recalled Jesus’ transfiguration. He may have thought about it often through the years. He was never the same again.

I don’t know how or when God touched you. I don’t know whether it first happened in your baptism or when you first believed when you heard the Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus. But at some point, God changed your life through Jesus.

You have been transformed from a creature of death to a child of the living God. One day your body will be like Jesus’ glorious body (Philippians 3:21, “Who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”)

Peter briefly witnessed Jesus’ glorified body on the Mount of Transfiguration. It changed his life. We have not physically seen Jesus. But we do see Him whenever we open the Bible and read about God’s plan to save sinners. This changes lives.

Prayer: Almighty God, thank You for changing our lives through faith in Jesus. Grant that we would clearly see Jesus through the eyes of faith, hope, and love through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Saturday

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

C Amen.

Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

L Praise the Lord, all nations!

C Extol him, all peoples!

L For great is his steadfast love toward us,

C and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

L Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;

C bring an offering, and come into his courts!

Verse of the Day: Psalm 45:2a

L Alleluia, Alleluia, You are the most handsome of the sons of men; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, Grace is poured upon your lips. 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 2:6–12

L ⁶“As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

C ⁷I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.

L ⁸Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

- C** ⁹**You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."**
L ¹⁰Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.
C ¹¹**Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.**
L ¹²Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled.
C **Blessèd are all who take refuge in him.**

If you read my Devotional Thoughts from Sunday, you know I'm not very good at recognizing the value of used furniture. This fact was recently confirmed again.

I picked up a lamp at the end of a rummage sale because it was free. I liked the lamp but it sat in my basement for a number of years and I never plugged it in. A while back, I decided that it was just gathering dust. Although I found it interesting, I needed to face reality. It had become just another item of clutter. I was determined to get rid of it.

A couple of weeks later, someone expressed interest in it. I said to her, "If you want it, it's yours." After taking it home, she sent me a picture of the lamp for sale online. It was priced at \$517. I didn't know this lamp had been crafted by an artisan. I had never looked at the bottom and notice his name on a label. Oh, well, such is life.

Our psalm for this week is Psalm 2:6–12. What did you think when you read it? Did it strike you as valuable and important? If it didn't impress you too much, you're not alone. Two of my "go-to" commentators gave it short shrift. If you were to rely on these two authors, you would be left with the impression that this is just one of the 150 psalms and that there is nothing very remarkable about it. Apparently, they couldn't recognize the value that another one of my "go-to" authors found in Psalm 2.

However, Walter Roehrs' words in the *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* were gushing with enthusiasm for Psalm 2. His praise caused me to see it as one of the crown jewels of the psalms. Here are his opening sentences:

Ps 2 is a prophecy of the reign of Jesus Christ, "anointed ... with the Holy Spirit and with power" "to be King of kings and Lord of lords" (Acts 10:38; Rv 19:16; 17:14). In winged words, coming from "the mouth of ... David ... by the Holy Spirit," the four strophes of this dramatic poem envision the fulfillment of the promise brought to David by Nathan the prophet (Acts 4:25–27; 13:33; 2 Sm 7:14–16).¹

How could I hope to add to that?

Prayer: Almighty God, thank You for the gift of Your psalms and the message of salvation proclaimed in them. Help us to see the depth of meaning that You have placed in the psalms and all of Your holy word as they point us to the "King of kings and Lord of lords" who sacrificed Himself on the cross for our salvation. Amen.

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¹Walter H. Roehrs and Martin H Franzmann, joint author, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*, electronic ed., 339 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998, c1979).