

TREASURY  
*of* DAILY  
PRAYER



*Presented to*

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*From*

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*Date*

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TREASURY  
*of* DAILY  
PRAYER



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GENERAL EDITOR  
SCOT A. KINNAMAN

Assisting Editors

Henry V. Gerike

Arthur A. Just Jr.

Nathan W. Higgins

Todd A. Peperkorn

David H. Petersen



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# INTRODUCTION

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Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. *1 Thessalonians 5:16–18*

Pray without ceasing.

I struggle with this.

From childhood, I have heard pastors preach, and as a pastor I have myself preached, that the life of the Christian is a life of prayer. I have instructed adults and confirmands, written articles, and made speeches on the structure and practice of prayer. I have advocated for daily individual and family devotions. I am armed with good intentions and plenty of resources. However, I still struggle to maintain a regular and vital life of meditation on God’s Word and prayer. Like my New Year’s resolutions, or my intentions for a Lenten fast, my resolve to have a time of structured daily devotion soon dissolves. Numerous prayer books and devotions sit on my bookshelf as silent accusers, witness to my failure. And what is more, I know I am not alone, among either pastors or laity.

Oh, how different are my days when I begin with reading Scripture, meditating upon it, singing a hymn, and praying. Yet I let Satan nudge me away from my intentions. Like you, I know and appreciate the value that regular devotion can bring to my life as a Christian. A spiritual discipline would be of benefit for both my faith and my life. Daily prayer should be central to what I do as a Christian. Yet I let the world encroach through the pressures of schedules and perceived priorities to rob me of this sacred time. Yes, most of us have a sense that our prayer life is not what it ought to be.

Take comfort in knowing that we have an Advocate who sits at the right hand of the Father and speaks on our behalf (1 John 2:1–3). Be assured that even when you and I neglect our prayers, the Holy Spirit Himself helps us in our weakness and intercedes with groans that even our words cannot express (Romans 8:26).

*Treasury of Daily Prayer* is designed to meet the needs of the Christian who wishes to follow a disciplined order of daily prayer centered in the Scriptures. It employs the rich resources of liturgy, hymnody, prayer, and writings from the Church Fathers and the Confessions. And it is designed so this period of devotion can be part of any schedule. *Treasury of Daily Prayer*, as much as possible, unites the resources for daily devotion together in one single place. While pastors and laypeople have numerous prayer books from which to choose, these resources often scatter the items for each day throughout the book or the book does not contain all that is needed for daily devotion, thus requiring the use of additional books.

It is with great eagerness that I have approached compiling and editing *Treasury of Daily Prayer* with the desire to make the practice of ordered daily devotions easier. This *Treasury* has been planned around the “daily exercise of reading and doing God’s Word” (Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 16). The Daily Lectionary, developed for *Lutheran Service Book* by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Commission on Worship, organizes and informs the selections made for each day’s devotion. Based upon this schedule, the full text of the appointed Scripture readings, along with the text of a selected Psalmody, hymn, prayer, and writings, are printed in one place for each day of the year. Truly, all that is needed for a daily devotion is contained within the covers of this book.

## WHAT’S IN *TREASURY OF DAILY PRAYER*?

*Treasury of Daily Prayer* is designed to be an all-in-one resource for daily devotions for individuals, families, and small groups. It features the Daily Lectionary developed for *Lutheran Service Book*. While the Daily Lectionary is sensitive to the seasons and rhythms of the Church Year, there has been no attempt to combine it with any of the various lectionaries (the appointed readings and propers for the Sundays and the feasts of Christ) for the Divine Service. Each arrangement of Scripture readings has its own particular character, pattern, and integrity. The Daily Lectionary, used in this book, becomes a true benefit in that *Treasury of Daily Prayer* can be used by any Christian.

### The Daily Lectionary

One of the most distinctive—and beneficial—characteristics of the Daily Lectionary is the way in which the days of the year are arranged for ease of use: first, according to the Church’s Time of Easter, followed by readings arranged by the civil calendar date for the remainder of the yearly cycle. This makes it easy to know (and find) exactly where you should be on any given day of the year.

*Treasury of Daily Prayer* begins the devotional year with Ash Wednesday in preparation for Holy Week and Easter. This choice of starting point reflects the origins of the Church Year, which began and developed around the Time of Easter (the weeks before and after the annual celebration of Christ’s Passion and resurrection). The days following Ash Wednesday are noted in relation to the Sundays in Lent and the Sundays of Easter, through the Feast of Pentecost and concluding with Holy Trinity. Most Christians are aware of and familiar enough with Ash Wednesday, the weeks of Lent, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, the Sundays of Easter, and the feasts of the Ascension, Pentecost, and Holy Trinity in order to find their way around this section of the *Treasury* without difficulty. Western Christians have been accustomed to thinking of Advent as the beginning of the Church Year, yet it is often the case that the season of Lent is a time when new commitments to a discipline of daily prayer and devotion are common—in contrast to the frantic, frenzied Season of Advent in December.

The rest of the *Treasury* is arranged according to the civil calendar and the dates that we all use to order and schedule our lives in this world. The Daily Lectionary begins this portion

of the calendar with the earliest date that may follow the Feast of the Holy Trinity—that is, May 18, in those years when Easter occurs at its earliest possible time. The days progress consecutively through the months of the civil calendar (June, July, August, and so on through February) to the latest possible date that may precede Ash Wednesday—that is, March 9, in those years when Easter occurs at its latest possible time. In this way, you only need to find that particular calendar date in the *Treasury* to find the appropriate readings.

## Orders for Daily Prayer

In the physical center of *Treasury of Daily Prayer* you will find the orders for Daily Prayer. These are easily recognized by the color-tipped pages. These orders, along with Compline (Prayer at the End of the Day), are taken from *Lutheran Service Book* and represent the rich tradition of daily prayer in the Christian community. Some users of this *Treasury* will be blessed by association with a congregation that prays daily the office of Matins or Vespers, or both. The majority of users will be using this book in small groups, in families, or individually. While some certainly will enjoy using Matins and Vespers in these smaller settings, or even individually, for others it may not be comfortable or practical. Therefore we have also included the briefer devotion of Daily Prayer for Individuals and Families (pp. 000–000). Whichever order you may choose, it is our prayer that you will consider a commitment to use one or more of these orders each day as you pray.

Seasonal Invitatories, Antiphons, and Responsories (pp. 000–000) for use with Matins and Vespers provide you with texts to celebrate and commemorate the feasts and seasons of the Church Year. Many of these texts were developed specifically for *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. While this seasonal material is presented with Matins and Vespers in mind, several of the texts, such as the seasonal antiphons, can be used in other settings of daily prayer and devotion.

## Propers for Daily Prayer

Propers are those texts within an order of worship or service that change with the seasons and days of the Church Year. In the *Treasury*, the propers for each day are noted and arranged according to the Daily Lectionary and are all included in one place. In most instances the texts chosen for the propers support one of the readings from Scripture. The propers for each day are:

### 1. Psalmody

The Psalter, the hymnbook of Scripture, is featured in two ways in *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. First, a Psalmody has been appointed for each day. The selected verses from a psalm that form the Psalmody set the tone and serve as an introduction for the readings that follow. A selection of antiphons are offered and can be used with the Psalmody to add a seasonal interpretation.

Traditionally, the Gloria Patri has been used as the closing for the recitation and praying of the psalms to give a Christian focus to these ancient hymns. It has become a familiar

pattern in the way a Christian prays the psalms. In an effort to conserve space, we consciously chose not to reprint the Gloria Patri as part of the Psalmody. However, the Gloria Patri does conclude each of the psalms in the Psalter section of the *Treasury*.

Second, for those who wish to use more of the Psalter as part of their daily devotion, or for those who may use the *Treasury* for more than one office during the day, one or two additional psalms are suggested. No attempt has been made, either in the Psalmody or the suggested additional psalms, to present all the verses of the Psalter or even to represent a selection of verses from all 150 psalms. Instead, the seasons and the readings have been used to select psalms.

## 2. Old Testament and New Testament Readings

The daily reading of the Word of God is the core content of *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. The actual text of two readings, one from the Old Testament and another from the New Testament, uses the text of the English Standard Version. The schedule for the Scripture readings follows the Daily Lectionary found in *Lutheran Service Book* and does not repeat the Sunday lessons or Gospel, nor do these readings repeat themselves during the course of the year.

The selections from Holy Scripture from one day to the next follow a semi-continuous course through entire books of the Bible. This is consistent with the ancient Christian precedent and practice of *lectio continua* (“continuous reading”). This approach allows Scripture to interpret itself in its own literary context. Thereby it also informs and shapes Christian prayer and devotion over the course of time. The semi-continuous reading of Holy Scripture does not mean that one must begin with Genesis and read straight through the Old Testament in order, nor with the Gospel of Matthew and read straight through the New Testament, though Christians in the history of the Church have done precisely that. The semi-continuous reading pattern developed by the Daily Lectionary assigns the various books of the Bible according to the liturgical seasons of the Church Year. By way of example, the prophet Isaiah and his many prophecies of the coming Christ is read during the Season of Advent, while the Acts of the Apostles is read during the post-Pentecost Time of the Church. Thus the readings relate to the Church Year in a broad, general fashion, not in the more focused and specific way that one expects for the lessons and Holy Gospel appointed for particular Sundays and festivals of the Church Year.

Together, the two daily Scripture readings include approximately forty verses—an amount that should prove manageable and encouraging rather than burdensome and disheartening. Depending on circumstance and personal preference, you might read both readings during a single devotion time each day. In this way, you would read almost the entire New Testament and roughly one third of the Old Testament over the course of the year. You could choose to read the Old Testament in the morning and the New Testament in the evening. Or you could choose to use only the Old Testament readings for one year, then in the next year read the New Testament selections.

Many of the portions of Scripture that have not been included in the Daily Lectionary are noted in the *Treasury* as suggested additional readings at appropriate points throughout the year.

### 3. Writing

An excerpt from the writings of a Church Father has been chosen for each day in *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. The writing can serve as a third reading or as a part of your meditation in your daily devotion. Normally the selected writing reflects or coincides in some way with (a) the daily Scripture readings, (b) the festival or commemoration assigned to that day, or (c) the feast or season of the Church Year.

The contributors and editors of the writings have, as much as possible, let the Fathers speak in their own voice, while at the same time employing modern English usage. Notable as exceptions are those Church Fathers who wrote in English—here we have made less of an attempt to update the writing. It should be noted that the translations are not critical works, but devotional works. Should one want to become a student and delve more deeply into the writings of a particular Father, more complete source information can be found in the Acknowledgments (pp. 000–000).

It is also appropriate to acknowledge the bias of the editors in the selection of the writings. A little more than half of the selected writings have been drawn from the Lutheran Confessions and the work of Martin Luther. Also of note is the inclusion of nineteenth-century writers, primarily Lutherans. There are certainly prayer books from other faith traditions; the breviaries of the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions are most notable. While *Treasury of Daily Prayer* presents clearly the Word of God in all its parts, and is thus valuable and useful to all Christians, the editors of the *Treasury* have firmly in mind the Confession and tradition of the churches of the Augsburg Confession, that is, the Lutheran Church. It should also be noted that there has been great selectivity in choosing what writings to feature from the Church Fathers. While great and faithful statements have come from many pens, some of these same writers have recorded works that are misguided, less than scriptural, and sometimes wrong. We have not made judgments of a writer's orthodoxy a prerequisite for including him among the writings. Nor have we knowingly included writings that do not square with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. In this way, prominent fathers in the faith from all eras of the Christian Church are represented in this section.

### 4. Hymnody

For each day of the year, *Treasury* includes the text of one or more hymn stanzas. While attention was given to the appointed Scripture readings, the liturgical and sanctoral calendars were also given consideration as hymn texts were chosen. The hymn stanzas can be prayed, recited, or sung as they are presented, but they certainly invite the possibility of using the hymnal and singing the hymn (in whole or in part) in the course of daily prayer and devotion.

## 5. Prayer of the Day

The Prayer of the Day is often a familiar text drawn from the collects of the Divine Service. In much the same way as the Psalmody sets the tone for the day, the Prayer of the Day collects the thoughts and themes in the texts selected for each day, especially the New Testament reading. Several new prayers have been written for inclusion in the *Treasury* for use on the days appointed to commemorate the biblical and churchly leaders with whom God has blessed His people.

## 6. Biography of the Saint, Festival, or Season

On the days when a commemoration or feast day is noted, *Treasury of Daily Prayer* provides a brief biographical description of the saint or event being remembered on that day. Approximately 120 commemorations are featured in the expanded sanctoral calendar in *Lutheran Service Book*. These offer opportunity to remember the faithful departed from the Old Testament, the New Testament, the early and medieval eras of the Church, the Reformation, and the Lutheran Church through the nineteenth century. Precedents for the names and dates of these commemorations include Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholic sources, but also most prominently the precedents of our own Lutheran Church.

## 7. Book of Concord

Together with the reading of Scripture, the reading of the Confessions forms the backbone of any endeavor to study God's Word and doctrine. Following Lutheran precedent, *Treasury of Daily Prayer* offers a schedule for reading through the Book of Concord during the course of a year. The entirety of the Confessions has been distributed over the days appointed in the Daily Lectionary and provides you with a semi-continuous reading pattern. No particular edition of the Book of Concord has been specified for these daily readings.

## 8. Lenten Catechesis

During the six weeks of Lent, the *Treasury* offers the texts of the six chief parts from Luther's Small Catechism, along with further teaching from the Confessions for study and meditation.

Catechesis, or instruction in the faith according to the catechism, has long been associated with Lent. In the Early Church, instruction in the faith during Lent led to Baptism and incorporation into the Church at the vigil on Easter Eve. From the time of the Reformation, specific times of the year were designated for public teaching and preaching on the chief articles of faith. (See *Ember Days*, p. 00.) Preaching on the chief parts of the catechism as part of the prayer offices during Lent has a tradition among Lutherans.

## Additional Resources for Daily Prayer and Devotion

### The Psalter

*Treasury of Daily Prayer* includes all 150 psalms beginning on page 000. The psalms are pointed so they may be chanted, and a brief introduction to the section offers directions and the chant tones that can be used. When the *Treasury* is being used by two or more in a small-group setting, the Psalm may be recited or sung responsively.

The *Treasury* offers two schedules for including the entire Psalter as a regular part of daily prayer. For those who desire to read the Psalter over a thirty-day period, a schedule begins on page 000. Following the tradition set by the *Standard Book of Common Prayer*, the psalms have been divided into sixty nearly equal parts and distributed over morning and evening devotions. If you continue this practice of reading through all 150 psalms on a monthly basis, you will become as familiar with the Psalms as you are with favorite or frequently sung hymns. In February, you can read extra psalms on the last day or two of the month to complete the Psalter. In months with thirty-one days, favorite psalms can be repeated, or you might choose to use a biblical canticle (p. 00), before beginning the cycle again on the first day of the next month. A second schedule that begins on p. 000 assists those who want to sing all 150 psalms over a two-week period during the Divine Office.

### Luther's Small Catechism

Luther and the churches of the Augsburg Confession have long stressed the importance of knowledge and understanding of the chief articles of Christian faith. Luther writes in the Short Preface to the Large Catechism: “[This catechism] teaches what every Christian must know. So a person who does not know this catechism could not be counted as a Christian or be admitted to any Sacrament, just as a mechanic who does not understand the rules and customs of his trade is expelled and considered incapable.” In the prefaces of both his Large and Small Catechism, Dr. Luther again emphasizes the importance of the daily study of the catechism. Toward this end, the *Treasury* includes Luther's Small Catechism.

### Prayers

It is not the intention of this *Treasury* to offer prayers for all types of private circumstances and needs. Most Christians likely already have one or more favorite sources that are used for this purpose. Nor would we wish, by a plethora of prayers for every possible circumstance, to suggest that *ex corde*, or “from the heart,” prayers are unnecessary or discouraged in personal devotions. Yet to achieve the goal of providing an all-in-one resource for daily devotions, and to set a model for personal prayer, several prayers are offered here. The section Daily Prayer for Christians (pp. 000–000) provides morning and evening prayers for each day of the week that encourage prayer not only for ourselves but also for the Church and for all those in need of our prayers. Prayers for the Baptized Life (pp. 000–000) encourage us to live out our Baptism in a right relationship with God and toward others. The Litany

(pp. 000–000) is a majestic and ancient prayer of the Church. It has formed and informed the prayers of Christians for centuries.

### Preparation for . . .

Christians live their lives from Sunday to Sunday. In the Divine Service, you hear God speak, announcing again His judgment against sin and proclaiming the propitiation made for sin and judgment in the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the assembly of Christ’s Church you hear the announcement that you have forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in Jesus Christ, and that reality is manifested not only in your ear but in your mouth as you receive His true body and blood in the bread and wine of the Sacrament of the Altar. Strengthened in faith and prepared by means of God’s holy gifts, we leave the Divine Service to live out our daily lives, our vocations, in relationship to God and to our neighbor. Our daily prayer, our daily devotions, are filled with the echo of what we received in the Divine Service.

Our daily prayer prepares us for the coming Sunday when we will again be in the presence of God in the Divine Service. In this way we live out our lives between Sundays, thirsting and hungering after our Lord’s righteousness (Matthew 5:6). Two sections are included in *Treasury of Daily Prayer* to assist us in this preparation. Preparation for Individual Confession and Absolution (pp. 000–000) is designed to help Christians examine themselves in light of God’s Word, especially the Ten Commandments, and to hear His absolution, the announcement of forgiveness. This section will serve the Christian well whether that confession is made individually or corporately. Preparation for the Sacrament of the Altar (pp. 000–000) puts before us not only the magnitude of our sin but also the overwhelming magnitude of God’s grace delivered to us in the life, death, and



*of Daily Prayer, that this book will be a blessing to you, that it will enrich your prayer life, that it will be true assistance in the daily exercise of reading and doing God’s Word, and that by it your faith will be strengthened.*

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. *Colossians 3:16–17*

Scot A. Kinnaman  
General Editor  
Monday after Pentecost, 2008

# ABBREVIATIONS

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AC	Augsburg Confession
AE	Luther's Works, American Edition
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
<i>LSB</i>	<i>Lutheran Service Book</i>
<i>LW</i>	<i>Lutheran Worship</i>
SA	Smalcald Articles
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope

## **Book of Concord Citation Examples**

Augsburg Confession XX 4 (Article XX,  
paragraph 4)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV 229  
(Article IV, paragraph 229)

Smalcald Articles III I 6 (Part III, Article I,  
paragraph 6)

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the  
Pope 5 (paragraph 5)

Small Catechism III 5 (Part III, paragraph 5)

Large Catechism V 32 (Part V, paragraph 32)

Epitome of the Formula of Concord V 8  
(Article X, paragraph 24)

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
X 24 (Article X, paragraph 24)



## FOREWORD

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Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. *Hebrews 12:1*

The discipline of daily prayer is as old as Scripture itself. The Old Testament gives witness to God's people at prayer in the morning and the evening (Psalm 55:17). The earliest Christian communities inherited the daily prayer patterns of ancient Judaism (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 3:1). Over the centuries, the specific patterns of Christian daily prayer varied between community, region, and era, but that Christians were praying daily and in an ordered fashion was virtually a constant.

At the time of the Reformation, the monastic prayer offices of Matins and Vespers were retained in Lutheran lands. In larger cities, clergy and parish school students continued to pray these offices and observe the festivals and saints' days as part of their daily routine. At home, Lutheran families were directed to their Bibles, catechisms, and hymnals for daily spiritual nourishment. Publications of Luther's "House Sermons," as well as martyrologies ("lives of the martyrs") by Georg Major and other reformers, provided additional devotional material for the faithful. Thus, in stereo, the voice of Lutherans at daily prayer was carried on in church and school through the use of Matins and Vespers, as well as at home through the use of various devotional resources.

In the nineteenth century, a resurgence of interest in *Hausandacht* ("home devotions") among Lutherans prompted a wealth of additional devotional publications from pastors and editors such as C. F. W. Walther, J. K. W. Loehe, August Crull, Georg Link, and many others. In the Missouri Synod, such a piety for daily devotions continued into the twentieth century with the advent of *Portals of Prayer* in 1937. And from 1870 until as late as 1940, even the calendar in the front of the *Lutheran Annual* and its parallel German edition carried on a rich commemoration of Old Testament, Early Church, medieval, and Lutheran saints.

Throughout the length and breadth of the Lutheran tradition, Scripture, psalmody, and hymnody have provided a core diet for Christ's holy people—all within a Church Year calendar that observes the life and teachings of Christ, as well as remembers and gives thanks for the lives of faithful Christians who have gone before us and are now in the midst of that "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1; Ap XXI 4–7). In this way, an observance of daily prayer finds itself integrally connected with the prayer life of the Church catholic—both in time and throughout the world today.

*Treasury of Daily Prayer* finds itself firmly rooted within this astonishingly rich tradition. At the heart and core of this volume is the Daily Lectionary. While based on ancient

lectionary patterns that preceded it, this Daily Lectionary is unlike most in that it begins where the development of the Church Year began historically—with the Lent-Easter cycle centered in the celebration of Easter, the “Queen of Feasts.” Psalms, hymns, prayers, and selected writings from the Church Fathers or the Lutheran Confessions all find their orbit around the appointed Scripture for the day.

Additional resources in *Treasury of Daily Prayer* include the traditional orders of Matins, Vespers, and Compline, as well as the order Daily Prayer for Individuals and Families. By offering a variety of possibilities, the *Treasury* provides an all-in-one resource for the family, individual, or small group.

The prayers we pray, we pray with one another—with those pilgrims who have gone before us and with those with whom we travel in this life to the next. And ahead of us all goes Jesus—the “founder and perfecter of our faith” and our Great High Priest who continues to intercede on our behalf (Hebrews 12:2; Romans 8:34). And His Spirit intercedes for us when we are not able to pray (Romans 8:26). Thus we sing with Luther:

To God the Holy Spirit let us pray  
 For the true faith needed on our way  
 That He may defend us when life is ending  
 And from exile home we are wending.  
 Lord, have mercy!  
 (*Lutheran Service Book* 768:1)

Jon D. Vieker  
 Assistant Director  
 LCMS Commission on Worship



## PREFACE

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It is with personal joy and satisfaction that I welcome the publication of *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. I have firsthand knowledge of the sincerity with which it was envisioned, as well as the labor of love by which it has been carefully assembled. It grew out of the work of the Lectionary Committee of the Lutheran Hymnal Project, a group with which I was privileged to serve from the beginning of that project in December 1998 until the publication and reception of *Lutheran Service Book* in fall 2006.

The primary responsibility of the Lectionary Committee was the development of the lectionary for the Sundays and festivals of the Church Year, that is, the appointed readings of the Holy Scriptures, the Psalmody, and the prayers used in the Divine Service.

The Lectionary Committee also desired to serve the practice of daily prayer with readings of Holy Scripture throughout the year. Indeed, the readings of the Word of God are the principal foundation for the book now in hand. A number of criteria were considered in putting together this daily lectionary of the Scriptures. We wanted to include as much of the Bible as possible, but to limit the length of each reading to a reasonable number of verses. We wanted the selections to follow the seasonal movements of the Church Year, but without becoming too complicated or difficult in arrangement. We wanted to be sure that not only the great stories of the Bible were featured but also those portions that might otherwise be overlooked and forgotten. In short, the committee wanted to lead people into the full scope of the Holy Scriptures in a way that would be encouraging and manageable.

With those criteria in place, I was assigned the task of assembling a one-year cycle of daily readings. There were to be two readings for each day, one from the Old and one from the New Testament. Numerous daily lectionaries were reviewed, as well as the daily prayer practices of the medieval Western Church and the broad contours of the Eastern Orthodox approach to the reading of the Scriptures. The four Holy Gospels were placed first as the key foundational building blocks, as well as the inclusion of as much as possible from the five Books of Moses. Further, to choose what other Scripture should be read, and at what point in the year it should be read, a variety of historical precedents were consulted. Sunday School and Lutheran Day School curriculums, as well as various other catechetical materials, were consulted in order to make sure that all the most necessary stories were included. By that arrangement, it was possible to include almost the entire New Testament and about one third of the Old Testament. Everything was planned along the seasonal lines of the Church Year, but without attempting to coordinate specifically with either of the Sunday lectionaries.

In addition, the committee developed a calendar of commemorations of saints drawn from the history of the Church—from the Old Testament through the Reformation and

beyond. These commemorations have been recovered from broad historical precedent, and they are offered in *Lutheran Service Book* and in *Treasury of Daily Prayer* in renewed support of those past examples of piety and practice among Lutherans. These commemorations are intended especially for the observances of daily prayer, whether in the home and family or in the chapels of our Lutheran schools.

As work progressed, the desire to provide a guide or manual for daily prayer based around the Daily Lectionary became a goal for the committee. With this in mind, the Daily Lectionary was organized to make it as simple as possible for any Christian to pick up the prayer book and use it. The Daily Lectionary's calendar begins with Ash Wednesday and continues through the entire Time of Easter according to the days of the Church Year. The remainder of the lectionary is assigned according to the civil calendar, from the earliest possible date that may follow Holy Trinity to the latest possible date that may precede Ash Wednesday. Another unique feature, envisioned to make the book easier to use, groups all the materials intended for each day in the same place. After all, busy parents with a family of active children cannot afford to lose everyone's attention while they search the book for the component that comes next.

With *Treasury of Daily Prayer* now in hand, readers may readily see that in addition to the daily selection of the Holy Scriptures, there are psalms, hymns, prayers, and writings from Church Fathers and the Confessions. The commemorations, as they occur throughout the year, are featured and supported with helpful information and additional resources for observation. All of this has been laid out with the utmost clarity and simplicity for the sake of allowing the Word of God to have free course among His people, lifting up their hearts and opening their lips in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

The goal and purpose of this book is that ordinary, everyday Christians are encouraged and assisted in the daily exercise of their faith, firmly grounded in God's Word and expressed in prayer. No book in the world (not even the Bible itself) can actually do the believing and praying for you, but this treasury of the Word of God—for that is precisely what this book is—provides you with the very means by which the dear Lord Jesus Christ and His life-giving Holy Spirit strengthen your faith and teach you to pray to our Father in heaven.

D. Richard Stuckwisch  
Feast of St. Mark, Evangelist  
25 April 2008

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# THE CHURCH YEAR

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## SUNDAYS AND SEASONS

### The Time of Christmas

#### **Advent Season**

First Sunday in Advent  
Second Sunday in Advent  
Third Sunday in Advent  
Fourth Sunday in Advent

#### **Christmas Season**

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
*Christmas Eve*  
*Christmas Midnight*  
*Christmas Dawn*  
*Christmas Day*

First Sunday after Christmas  
Second Sunday after Christmas

#### **Epiphany Season**

The Epiphany of Our Lord  
First Sunday after the Epiphany  
*The Baptism of Our Lord*  
Second Sunday after the Epiphany  
Third Sunday after the Epiphany  
Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany  
Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany  
Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany  
Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany  
Eighth Sunday after the Epiphany  
Last Sunday after the Epiphany  
*The Transfiguration of Our Lord*

3-Year  
Lect.

### The Time of Easter

#### **Pre-Lent Season**

Septuagesima  
Sexagesima  
Quinquagesima

1-Year  
Lect.

#### **Lenten Season**

Ash Wednesday  
First Sunday in Lent  
Second Sunday in Lent  
Third Sunday in Lent  
Fourth Sunday in Lent  
Fifth Sunday in Lent

#### **Holy Week**

Palm Sunday  
*Sunday of the Passion*  
Monday in Holy Week  
Tuesday in Holy Week  
Wednesday in Holy Week  
Holy (Maundy) Thursday  
Good Friday  
Holy Saturday

#### **Easter Season**

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD  
*Vigil of Easter*  
*Easter Sunrise*  
*Easter Day*  
*Easter Evening/Easter Monday*  
*Easter Tuesday*  
*Easter Wednesday*  
Second Sunday of Easter  
Third Sunday of Easter

Fourth Sunday of Easter  
 Fifth Sunday of Easter  
 Sixth Sunday of Easter  
 The Ascension of Our Lord  
 Seventh Sunday of Easter

## PENTECOST

*Pentecost Eve*  
*The Day of Pentecost Pentecost Evening/*  
*Pentecost Monday*  
*Pentecost Tuesday*

**The Time of the Church*****The Season after Pentecost***

The Holy Trinity  
 Second through Twenty-seventh Sunday  
 after Pentecost (*3-Year Lectionary*)  
 First through Twenty-sixth Sunday  
 after Trinity (*1-Year Lectionary*)  
 Last Sunday of the Church Year

**FEASTS, FESTIVALS, AND COMMEMORATIONS**

The feasts and festivals are listed in roman type. The observations listed in **boldface** are principal feasts of Christ and, when they occur on a Sunday, normally replace the regularly scheduled pericopes for corporate worship for that Sunday of the Church Year. The commemorations are noted in *italics*.

**January**

1 **Circumcision and Name of Jesus**  
 18 The Confession of St. Peter  
 24 St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor  
 25 The Conversion of St. Paul  
 26 St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor

**February**

2 **The Purification of Mary and the  
 Presentation of Our Lord**  
 24 St. Matthias, Apostle

**March**

19 St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus  
 25 **The Annunciation of Our Lord**

**April**

25 St. Mark, Evangelist

**May**

1 St. Philip and St. James, Apostles  
 31 **The Visitation** (*3-Year Lectionary*)

**June**

11 St. Barnabas, Apostle  
 24 **The Nativity of St. John the Baptist**  
 29 St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles

**July**

2 **The Visitation** (*1-Year Lectionary*)  
 22 St. Mary Magdalene  
 25 St. James the Elder, Apostle

**August**

15 St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord  
 24 St. Bartholomew, Apostle  
 29 The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist

**September**

14 Holy Cross Day  
 21 St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist  
 29 **St. Michael and All Angels**

**October**

18 St. Luke, Evangelist  
 23 St. James of Jerusalem, Brother of Jesus  
 and Martyr

- 28 St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles  
31 Reformation Day

### **November**

- 1 **All Saints' Day**  
30 St. Andrew, Apostle

### **December**

- 21 St. Thomas, Apostle  
26 St. Stephen, Martyr  
27 St. John, Apostle and Evangelist  
28 The Holy Innocents, Martyrs  
31 **Eve of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus**  
*New Year's Eve*

## **Commemorations**

### **January**

- 2 J. K. Wilhelm Loehe, *Pastor*  
10 Basil the Great of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa, *Pastors and Confessors*  
20 Sarah  
27 John Chrysostom, *Preacher*

### **February**

- 5 Jacob (Israel), *Patriarch*  
10 Silas, *Fellow Worker of St. Peter and St. Paul*  
13 Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos  
14 Valentine, *Martyr*  
15 Philemon and Onesimus  
16 Philipp Melancthon (birth), *Confessor*  
18 Martin Luther, *Doctor and Confessor*  
23 Polycarp of Smyrna, *Pastor and Martyr*

### **March**

- 7 Perpetua and Felicitas, *Martyrs*  
17 Patrick, *Missionary to Ireland*  
31 Joseph, *Patriarch*

### **April**

- 6 Lucas Cranach and Albrecht Dürer, *Artists*  
20 Johannes Bugenhagen, *Pastor*  
21 Anselm of Canterbury, *Theologian*  
24 Johann Walter, *Kantor*

### **May**

- 2 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Pastor and Confessor*  
4 Friedrich Wyneken, *Pastor and Missionary*  
5 Frederick the Wise, *Christian Ruler*  
7 C. F. W. Walther, *Theologian*  
9 Job  
11 Cyril and Methodius, *Missionaries to the Slavs*  
21 Emperor Constantine, *Christian Ruler*, and Helena, *Mother of Constantine*  
24 Esther  
25 Bede the Venerable, *Theologian*

### **June**

- 1 Justin, *Martyr*  
5 Boniface of Mainz, *Missionary to the Germans*  
12 The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, AD 325  
14 Elisha  
25 Presentation of the Augsburg Confession  
26 Jeremiah  
27 Cyril of Alexandria, *Pastor and Confessor*  
28 Irenaeus of Lyons, *Pastor*

### **July**

- 6 Isaiah  
16 Ruth  
20 Elijah  
21 Ezekiel  
28 Johann Sebastian Bach, *Kantor*  
29 Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany  
30 Robert Barnes, *Confessor and Martyr*  
31 Joseph of Arimathea

**August**

- 3 Joanna, Mary, and Salome, *Myrrhbearers*
- 10 Lawrence, *Deacon and Martyr*
- 16 Isaac
- 17 Johann Gerhard, *Theologian*
- 19 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Hymnwriter and Theologian*
- 20 Samuel
- 27 Monica, *Mother of Augustine*
- 28 Augustine of Hippo, *Pastor and Theologian*

**September**

- 1 Joshua
- 2 Hannah
- 3 Gregory the Great, *Pastor*
- 4 Moses
- 5 Zacharias and Elizabeth
- 16 Cyprian of Carthage, *Pastor and Martyr*
- 22 Jonah
- 30 Jerome, *Translator of Holy Scripture*

**October**

- 7 Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, *Pastor*
- 9 Abraham
- 11 Philip the Deacon
- 17 Ignatius of Antioch, *Pastor and Martyr*
- 25 Dorcas (Tabitha), Lydia, and Phoebe, *Faithful Women*
- 26 Philipp Nicolai, Johann Heermann, and Paul Gerhardt, *Hymnwriters*

**November**

- 8 Johannes von Staupitz, *Luther's Father Confessor*
- 9 Martin Chemnitz (birth), *Pastor and Confessor*
- 11 Martin of Tours, *Pastor*
- 14 Emperor Justinian, *Christian Ruler and Confessor of Christ*
- 19 Elizabeth of Hungary
- 23 Clement of Rome, *Pastor*
- 29 Noah

**December**

- 4 John of Damascus, *Theologian and Hymnwriter*
- 6 Nicholas of Myra, *Pastor*
- 7 Ambrose of Milan, *Pastor and Hymnwriter*
- 13 Lucia, *Martyr*
- 17 Daniel the Prophet and the Three Young Men
- 19 Adam and Eve
- 20 Katharina von Bora Luther
- 29 David



## DATES OF EASTER

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Easter Day is always the Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox on March 21. This full moon may happen on any day between March 21 and April 18 inclusive. If the full moon falls on a Sunday, Easter Day is the Sunday following. Easter Day cannot be earlier than March 22 or later than April 25.

Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, falls in the seventh week before Easter. The Ascension of our Lord occurs on a Thursday, forty days after Easter. The Day of Pentecost is seven weeks, or the fiftieth day, after Easter Day.

2009—April 12	2017—April 16	2025—April 20	2033—April 17
2010—April 4	2018—April 1	2026—April 5	2034—April 9
2011—April 24	2019—April 21	2027—March 28	2035—March 25
2012—April 8	2020—April 12	2028—April 16	2036—April 13
2013—March 31	2021—April 4	2029—April 1	2037—April 5
2014—April 20	2022—April 17	2030—April 21	2038—April 25
2015—April 5	2023—April 9	2031—April 13	2039—April 10
2016—March 27	2024—March 31	2032—March 28	2040—April 1

# THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH YEAR

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## BACKGROUND

The life of the Church is centered around the Church's worship. As Christians gather for worship, they do so with a strong sense of time and history. Humans have always been time conscious. Light and darkness regulate our days. Daily life is ordered by the activities of work and rest. Seasons change in a regular way from times of growth to times of death. God established this time consciousness. Genesis 1 shows the centrality of time, which God created when He instituted "evening and . . . morning, the first day" (Genesis 1:5). God set the time markers in the heavens on the fourth day "to separate the day from the night. And [to] let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years" (Genesis 1:14). God rested on the seventh day as a model for us (Exodus 20:8–11).

Christians retain this sense of time. Our seven-day week continues to recall God's incomparable creation of the world. Early Christians recalled the historic time-related events that were important to their faith, especially events in the life of Jesus. They realized that God entered our world "when the fullness of time had come" (Galatians 4:4). Mark tells us that Jesus' first sermon was about time: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). In his Gospel, Luke also reminds us of the timeliness of Christ's arrival: "In the days of Herod, king of Judea" (Luke 1:5); "This was the first registration when Quirinius was

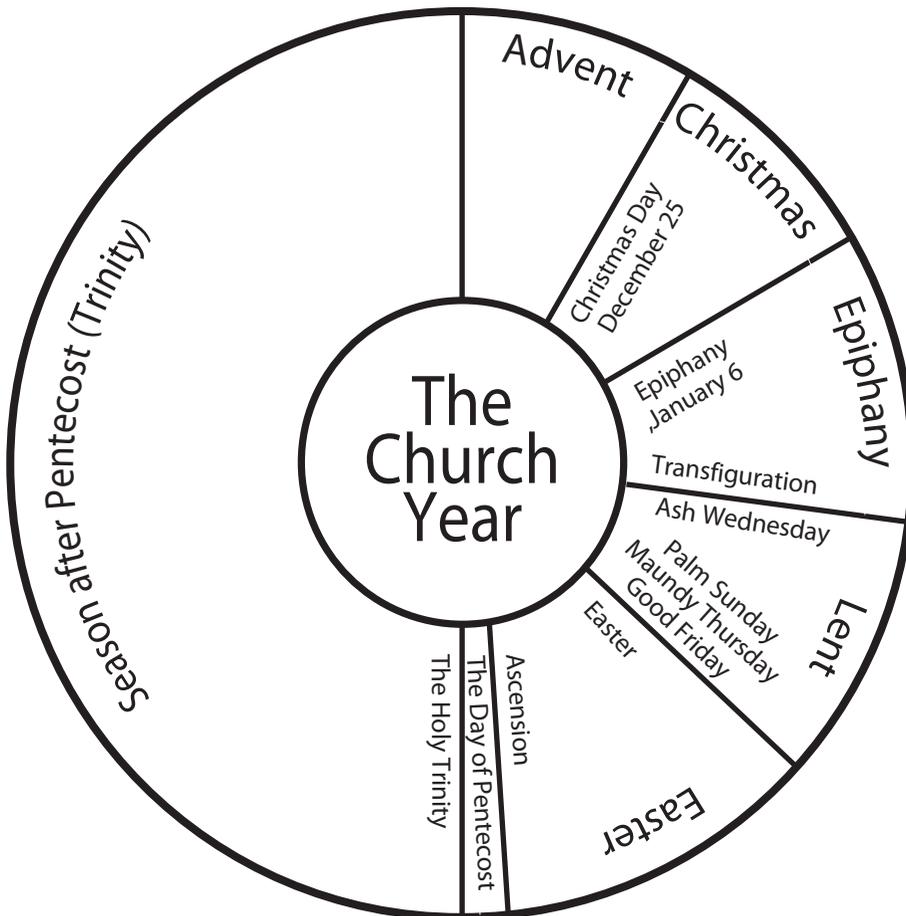
governor of Syria" (Luke 2:2). The evangelist John also reports specific historical settings for our Lord's ministry (John 10:22–23). A Sunday close to Passover is now celebrated as the feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord (Luke 24:1). The Jewish harvest festival of Pentecost is remembered now as the birthday of the Christian Church (Acts 2:1).

Christians also have added their own unique celebrations and adapted others to trinitarian understandings. Easter is the principle feast day of the Church. It is the Son's Day of Days as the Church celebrates the Resurrection of Our Lord; it is also an event by which Christians identify themselves as distinctly new creations. The Nativity of Our Lord, celebrated on December 25, is the second great Christian feast and is most clearly the Father's Day. On this day, God gives His most precious gift of life to the world in the person of His Son, Jesus. Finally, Pentecost is celebrated with a specific focus on the Holy Spirit's presence, power, and purpose. Thus Pentecost is the Spirit's Day. Celebrations of the Epiphany and the Transfiguration of Our Lord also recall Jesus' ministry in power and glory. Holy Trinity Sunday reminds us of the great controversies and struggles in the first three centuries of Christianity as the Church sought to clarify and articulate the biblical revelation of God's unity in three distinct persons. As time passed, notable Church

leaders were remembered on their death day, underscoring the fact that death is actually an entrance or birth into the new life with Christ in heaven.

The Christian calendar is retained in Christian Church bodies throughout the world for several reasons. First, a regular calendar is helpful to keep the remembrances before us. Just as God commanded the Jewish people to recall how He had delivered them in the past (e.g., the Passover, Exodus 12:14; Leviticus 23:4–8), so, too, early Christians recalled the historic time-related events that

were important to their faith, as Jesus had encouraged His disciples to do (Luke 22:19). Second, following their Jewish predecessors, Christians consider the regularity of the holidays as teaching moments, with the celebration of the events of Christ’s life used to tell and retell the Good News. Finally, Christians recognize that this life is not an end in itself. Christ’s victory over death means that daily life focuses beyond the mundane to eternity. A calendar of Christian events unites present-day believers with those of the past as well as the future.



## THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

### THE TIME OF CHRISTMAS

The Savior's birth is second in importance only to His resurrection on Easter Sunday. During Christmas and its season, Christians take time to reflect on God's great and gracious gift of Himself.

#### *Advent*

Begins the fourth Sunday before December 25, or the Sunday closest to St. Andrew (November 30).

Ends with midday prayer on December 24.

The calendar of the Church begins with Advent (from Latin *adventus*, which means "coming into"), a four-week period of preparation before Christmas. The story of Jesus in Advent is the story of hope coming into the world. When the time was just right, God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world. The Advent season teaches us to prepare to receive Jesus, the hope of the world.

It has become common to use an Advent wreath to mark the season. An Advent wreath has four candles—one for each week in Advent. As these candles are lit each week, our anticipation mounts as we look forward to Jesus' coming.

#### *Christmas and Its Season*

Begins with evening prayer on Christmas Eve (December 24).

Ends with midday prayer on January 5.

The evening services of Christmas Eve mark the beginning of the Church's celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord. The season continues after December 25 over a period traditionally known as the twelve days of Christmas. This season includes a number

of lesser festivals: The festival of St. Stephen, the first martyr, occurs on December 26. St. John, apostle and evangelist, is remembered on December 27. The death of the babies in Bethlehem (Matthew 2) is observed on December 28 as the festival of the Holy Innocents. The circumcision and naming of Jesus on the eighth day after His birth (Luke 2:21) is celebrated on January 1.

#### *Epiphany and Its Season*

Begins with evening prayer on January 5.

Ends the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.

Epiphany is one of the oldest seasons in the Christian Church Year, second only to the Easter season. This season of lights emphasizes Jesus' manifestation (or epiphany, from the Greek *epiphaneia*) as God and man. The earliest Christians called the feast of the Epiphany the Theophany ("revelation of God"). When the Gentile Magi come to worship Jesus, they show that now everyone has access to God. Now all people, Jew and Gentile, can come to God's temple to worship, because Jesus is the new temple: God in the flesh. The Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6) marks the celebration of the visit of the Magi.

Epiphany may include as many as nine Sundays, depending on the date of Easter. The season is marked at its beginning and at its end by two important feasts of Christ. On the First Sunday after the Epiphany, the Church celebrates the Baptism of Our Lord. The Father had sent Jesus to bear the sins of the world. So Jesus steps down into baptismal waters so that He can soak up the sins of the world: He is baptized into our sins, so that

our Baptism might be into His death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins.

The feast of the Transfiguration, celebrated on the last Sunday in the Epiphany season, is a significant and uniquely Lutheran contribution to the Christian calendar. This festival commemorates the moment on the Mount of Transfiguration when three of Jesus' disciples glimpsed their Lord in divine splendor, seeing Him as the center of the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). He proclaimed to His disciples, then and now, that He was the long-awaited one who had come to die for the sins of the world and be raised again in glory.

## THE TIME OF EASTER

Easter celebrates the chief event in the life of Christ and was the major celebration among early Christians. Given that Easter is both a movable date and also a principal celebration of the Church Year, the date of Easter determines much of the rest of the Church Year. Generally speaking, Easter is observed on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox. The date of Easter will influence the date of Ash Wednesday, the fortieth day (not counting Sundays) before Easter; the date of the Transfiguration, the Sunday before Ash Wednesday; and the number of Sundays in Epiphany and after Pentecost.

### *Lent*

Begins on Ash Wednesday.

Ends with midday prayer on Holy Saturday.

The resurrection of Jesus is our great salvation. To prepare to celebrate the feast of the Resurrection (Easter), the Church

sets aside a period of preparation. In AD 325, the Council of Nicaea recorded the first reference to the specific number of days for Lent: forty. This forty-day preparation was first prescribed for baptismal candidates and became known as Lent (from the Old English word for "spring"). During this period, the candidates were examined in preparation for Baptism at the Easter (or Paschal) Vigil. Later, these forty days were associated with Jesus' forty days in the desert prior to His temptation (Matthew 4) and with the forty years the children of Israel spent in the wilderness (Numbers 14:34) and became a period of preparation for every Christian.

Ash Wednesday begins the observance of Lent. The placing of ashes on the forehead is a sign of penitence and a reminder of human mortality. The Sundays during this season are not "of Lent" but "in Lent." Thus the Sundays retain an Easter tone and may be less solemn than the midweek services that congregations typically offer. The observances of Lent are concrete reminders of the greater solemnity of this season, yet Lutherans emphasize the Gospel of Christ as central even to this penitential season.

### *Holy Week*

The week before Easter is called Holy Week and culminates the preparation time of Lent. This week begins on Palm Sunday and ends on Holy Saturday. During these days, we focus on the events of Jesus' life from His entrance into Jerusalem until His glorious resurrection from the dead. Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week, commemorates the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:9). Because the complete account of the Lord's Passion from Matthew,

Mark, or Luke is often read, this Sunday is also called the Sunday of the Passion.

On Holy Thursday, the Church gives thanks to Jesus for the institution of the Lord's Supper. The Holy Thursday service closes with the stripping of the altar while Psalm 22—a prophecy of the crucifixion—is read or sung. This reminds us of how our Lord stripped to the waist to wash His disciples' feet—and how He was stripped and beaten before His crucifixion.

Good Friday is the most solemn of all days in the Christian Church, yet a note of joy remains, as the title of the day indicates. On Good Friday, as we remember that on account of our sin the Lord was crucified and died, we give joyful thanks to God that all sin and God's wrath over sin falls on Jesus and not on us, and that by His grace we receive the benefit of this most sacrificial act.

### *Easter and Its Season*

Begins with evening prayer on Holy Saturday. Ends with midday prayer on Pentecost.

Easter is a victory celebration, a time for all Christians to proclaim boldly their faith in a risen and victorious Savior. For the early Christians, Easter was not merely one day, it was (and is) a whole season that also includes the celebration of Jesus' ascension. The fifty days between Easter and Pentecost, known as the Great Fifty Days, was the first liturgical season observed in the first three centuries of the Church. This fifty-day celebration is a week of weeks, renewed in the last decades by emphasizing the Sundays as being "of Easter." The season's length is fitting because we are dedicating one seventh of the year to the Lord's resurrection.

The first celebration of Easter is the Easter Vigil, the evening of Holy Saturday.

The Vigil includes a service of light, in which fire symbolizes Jesus as the light of the world. The service is designed to take the Christian from the solemnity of Good Friday to the predawn joy of Easter.

Easter is the richest and most lavishly celebrated festival of the Church Year. Congregations may hold a sunrise service, commemorating the surprise of the women visiting the empty tomb of Christ, as well as services that celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. While not as lavish, this joyous and celebratory tone echoes down through the Sundays of the Easter season.

Forty days after Easter (Acts 1:3), the Church celebrates the Ascension of Our Lord, who ascended into heaven not only as God but also as man. The final Sunday of the Easter season, celebrated as Pentecost, was adopted by early Christians to commemorate the first great harvest of believers for Christ (Acts 2:1–41). Thus Pentecost is the birthday of the Christian Church as the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and they gave their compelling witness about the resurrected Lord. Pentecost is a day of joy in the gifts of the Spirit as He still reaches into our lives just as He did to the crowds on that first Pentecost: through the apostolic preaching of God's Word and Holy Baptism.

## THE TIME OF THE CHURCH

Jesus told His disciples, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). We are each grafted into Jesus and made a branch of the Vine by the power of the Spirit in Holy Baptism. We stay

connected to Jesus, our Vine, by hearing the preaching of God’s Word and receiving Absolution and the Lord’s Supper. This is how our life in Christ grows: by the power of the Spirit working in our hearts through Word and Sacrament. The Sundays after Pentecost make up the longest portion of the Church Year. This is the time of the Church—the time we focus on growing together in the life of the Holy Trinity.

*The Holy Trinity*

The first Sunday after Pentecost.

We are baptized into only one name, the name of God. But that name is “of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” There is only one name, only one God—but there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each person is God, and each is not the others, but there is only one God. This is the great mystery of the Holy Trinity. On the first Sunday after Pentecost, the Church celebrates Holy Trinity Sunday and teaches us to confess the mystery of God’s being.

*The Season after Pentecost*

Begins the day after Pentecost.

Ends with midday prayer on the Saturday before the First Sunday in Advent.

The Sundays of this time of the Church Year are known as Sundays after Pentecost. Picking up on Pentecost as the season of growth, the Sundays after Pentecost are often referred to as the Green Sundays. It is during this season that the Readings focus on the teachings of the Lord for the Church. We hear Jesus teaching His disciples and healing the faithful.

Because the Pentecost season is “ordinary,” as the Roman Catholic Church identifies it, congregations may choose to observe some of the lesser festivals of the season. When significant saint days or commemorations fall on Sundays, worship leaders could highlight these to offer teaching moments about the breadth of the Church’s life and work. These noteworthy days enable the Christian to reflect on how we worship “with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven” (*Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book*, p. 161).

*Last Sunday of the Church Year*

The Church Year began with Advent and the joyful hope and expectation of Jesus’ coming to save the world through His incarnation. On the Last Sunday after Pentecost, the Church gives voice to the joyful hope of the second coming of Jesus for the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment. The end-times focus of the Last Sunday of the Church Year bears themes of hope and preparation that are similar to those of Advent, which soon follows. This liturgical calendar was essentially complete by the end of the sixth century, though it continues to be transmuted through additions and emphases.

## SAINT DAYS AND LESSER FESTIVALS

The long tradition of the Church seen in the Church Year calendar provides an additional resource for worship, prayer, and piety in the form of saint days and other appropriate holy days. In addition to the three festival seasons of Easter, Pentecost, and Epiphany, a tradition began among early Christians of recalling the anniversaries of local martyrs. Congregations would each have a roll of those who had suffered and died for the faith. These would be honored, with their names read at commemorative services on the days of their martyrdom. These dates were often called the martyr's birthday into eternity.

A better term for recognizing the contributions of these faithful early Christian believers is the commemoration of the saints. A calendar of commemorations is valuable to the Christian as a way of encouraging people to examine the personal stories of certain women and men to learn of the richness and the potential of human life lived by the grace of God in Jesus Christ—people whose

common denominator is simply that the grace of God worked mightily within them.

Luther said that it is important for Christians to recall the saints because they are excellent models for our faith and life, concrete examples of following Christ. Such commemorations, then, draw together our memories so that we can express our thanks to God for His gracious Spirit, as well as receive encouragement in our own activities. Lutherans have continued to celebrate the faith of some who have joined the Church Triumphant. November 1, All Saints' Day, is central for Lutherans in this regard.

Luther reduced the number of saint days, festivals, and commemorations on the Lutheran liturgical calendar by eliminating those that were most distant from Christ's life and work, yet the variety of minor festivals on the present calendar is astounding. This variety and flexibility offers numerous opportunities for local distinctions.



## ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAY

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There is nothing more basic to the Christian faith and life than prayer. For prayer is the very voice of faith itself and the primary good work of the Christian life, an act of love for both God and the neighbor. It is of first importance, St. Paul writes, that “prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people” (1 Timothy 2:1) in the name of and for the sake of Jesus Christ, who died for all and desires that all are saved. Christians are therefore to pray at all times, “without ceasing,” and not to lose heart (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1).

How, then, shall we pray? The Lord Himself must teach us by His Word and with His Holy Spirit, because we do not know how to pray as we should (Luke 11:1–4; Romans 8:14–27). Not only has Jesus commanded us to pray and promised to hear us, but He also has given us the words with which to pray in His name (John 15:16; 16:26–27; Matthew 6:6–13; 18:19–20). He not only teaches but also exemplifies the life of prayer: from the waters of the Jordan (Luke 3:21) to the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39–46); from His transfiguration (Luke 9:29) to His crucifixion (Luke 23:33–34, 46; Hebrews 5:7). What is more, having sacrificed Himself for us upon the cross as our great High Priest, Jesus has also risen from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25).

This is our sure and certain confidence in prayer: that Christ and His Spirit pray with us and for us (John 17; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:14–27). We pray to “our Father in heaven” as those who are baptized into Christ Jesus, the beloved and well-pleasing Son (Luke 3:21–22). His God and Father is our God and Father (John 20:17; Galatians 4:4–7), and His prayer is our prayer. It is for this reason that we “ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach,” and that we do so “in faith, with no doubting” (James 1:5–6).

That voice of faith which approaches the throne of grace with all boldness and confidence (Hebrews 10:19–23), like that of little children asking of their dear father, arises in our hearts and from our mouths by the hearing of the Word of Christ (Romans 10:17). Christian prayer necessarily begins, therefore, not with our speaking, but with that hearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. For He is merciful to all who call upon Him in truth, but how shall we call upon Him whom we have not heard (Romans 10:11–14)?

Prayer goes hand-in-hand with the Word of God, and we cannot pray without it. The prayer of the Church belongs inseparably to the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, who devoted themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 2:42; 6:4). So it is that all things are sanctified to our use by the Word of God and prayer (1 Timothy 4:4–5). We do not have the one without the other. It is the Word of the Lord that opens our

lips to pray, praise, and give thanks (Psalm 51:15). Before it is ever a petition or request, prayer is first the confession of what God has spoken; and already in asking for what He has promised, we give thanks, for we know that His answer in Christ Jesus is always *Yes* and *Amen*, it shall be so (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Every good and perfect gift is from the Lord, our God and Father in Christ Jesus, including all that we need for both body and soul, for this life and the life everlasting. All that God has created and given to us is to be “received with thanksgiving” and, again, “made holy by the word of God and prayer” (1 Timothy 4:4–5). In this way, His name is kept holy among us, the very first thing for which Jesus has taught us to pray. So, too, we sanctify each day as a Sabbath rest in Christ; not simply Saturday or Sunday, but all our days and nights, evenings and mornings. His name is holy in itself, and every day is holy to the Lord, but these sacred things are made holy for us by the speaking and hearing of God’s Word in faith.

The rhythm of daily prayer is really a daily catechesis in the Word of God. As we hear and confess His Word, as we are instructed in the way of faith and love by the Law and the Gospel, and as we are thus taught to pray, the Holy Spirit is actively present and at work to bring us daily to repentance. He calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies us in the faith, and keeps us united with Christ our Lord. All of this the Spirit does by the Word, which puts the old Adam in us to death and raises us to newness of life with our crucified and risen Lord Jesus. That is the rhythm of life for every baptized believer in Christ, but it never is by our own reason and strength. In the weakness of our faith,

we simply cry out, “Lord, have mercy and help us!” We avail ourselves of His Word and Spirit, and we pray. We rely upon the ministry of His Gospel in His Church, and no less so do we give attention to His Word and prayer all week long. Indeed, the stronger and more mature a Christian is, the more he or she will gladly hear and learn the Word of God; and, in doing so, the more frequently and fervently he or she will pray.

There is no time of the day or night when a Christian does not cry out from the heart to the Lord in repentant faith. Faith itself is already the inward groaning of the Holy Spirit within us for Christ our Lord (Romans 8:26–27). But as we believe with the heart, so do we confess with the mouth that Jesus is our Lord and God (Romans 10:8–10). As we have heard, so do we believe, and so do we speak in confession and prayer (2 Corinthians 4:13).

To call upon the name of the Lord is the Christian’s daily sacrifice of thanksgiving, in the morning and at the close of day (Psalm 88:1–2, 13; 116:17; 119:147–148; 139:11–12; 141:1–2). With such prayer, whereby we look to the Lord for all that we need, we worship and adore Him as our true and only God. Not only that, but in our love for Him we also pray and intercede for His entire Church and for the whole world, which He so loves, and for which He has given His only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose dear name we pray. In our prayer and intercession for the world—for our neighbors near and far, known and unknown, both friend and foe—we are united to Christ our Head, our great High Priest, as a royal priesthood of the baptized. Praying for our neighbor in this way, as Christ Jesus prays for us and for all, is the

most distinctive and definitive duty of our priestly vocation as Christians.

As often as we pray the Lord's Prayer, and as often as we pray in any way in the name of Jesus, we are praying for His entire Church in heaven and on earth, and for as many as He will call to Himself to be His own dear children from all the nations (Acts 2:39). In that same light, it is comforting to realize that His entire Church is always praying day and night for each and all of us, from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets (Malachi 1:11; Psalm 113:2–3). So do we Christians have all things in common, and with our prayers we love and serve one another (Acts 2:42–47).

As fundamental as all of this is to the Christian faith and life—as significant and necessary as the Word of God and prayer are to our spiritual health and strength—the actual practice of daily prayer does not come so easily or naturally to any of us poor sinners. How often have we tried, perhaps, to establish some routine, some discipline of prayer and devotion, whether on our own or with our families, only to find that it becomes harder and harder to maintain? We are easily distracted by “the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things” (Mark 4:19), and we so readily give away our time, attentions and energies to “every weight, and sin which clings so closely” (Hebrews 12:1). It seems burdensome to devote ourselves, our hearts and minds, our bodies and souls, to the Word of the Lord. Yet His Word alone endures forever, while all of those temporal things that we chase after will wither and fade like the grass and the flower of the field (1 Peter 1:24–25). The more we are enticed by the idols of this world, the more desperately

we need the Word of the one true God in Christ!

Thankfully, God does not leave us tossed about and helpless, but in His compassion shepherds us. By His grace and tender mercy, He encourages us and assists us in the discipline of daily prayer, first by His commands and promises. “For He Himself has commanded us to pray and has promised to hear us” (Small Catechism). Again, along with His exhortation and admonition, Jesus has also given us the very words with which we are to pray: “Our Father, who art in heaven.” He has taught us how to pray, not only by His Holy Scriptures, but even before we could read, He put His prayer upon our lips, and thereby into our hearts and minds, by the teaching and example of our parents and pastors. The Second and Third Commandments, too, not only expose our sin, but serve as a curb and a guide, as a rule of faith and prayer. The Second Table of the Law helps to protect our neighbor from the harm that we would do him, but the First Table of the Law is for our own protection, that we should not neglect to hear the Word of God and call upon His name. Our earthly parents require us to eat our vegetables, even before we have learned to enjoy them. So does our Father in heaven command us to listen and to pray, even when we would rather not. Then, by His living and active Word, God brings our hearts and minds along in repentance.

The Lord Jesus continues teaching us to pray, and His Holy Spirit daily continues to help us in our weakness. He does so by the ways and the means of His Word, by the agency of His Church on earth and the ministry of His Gospel.

# THE DAILY OFFICE

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Christian prayer is rooted in the Word of God. We hear the voice of God through the Holy Scriptures. As we receive this Word from God, the heart of faith desires to respond. It is out of this receiving of God's Word and the desire to respond that conversation with God, which is prayer, happens.

The ancient form of structured prayer through the day, often called the Daily Office or the Liturgy of the Hours, is not simply a way to encourage Christians to pray; rather, it is a tool developed by the Church to instruct us in prayer and faith, a means to keep our conversation with God rooted in His Word.

## OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

Praying at appointed times during the day can be traced back to the Old Testament practice of praying at fixed hours of the day. God commanded the Israelite priests to offer morning and evening sacrifices (Exodus 29:38–39; 30:6–8). Psalm 1:2 instructs: “But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night.” When sacrifices were outlawed during Israel's forced exile in Babylon, prayer services were developed in the synagogues as sacrifices of praise. Upon the return of the Jewish people to Judea, those prayer services were brought into the temple. In addition to the prayers accompanying the morning and evening

sacrifices, there was prayer at the third, sixth, and ninth hours of the day (Psalm 119:164). Much evidence suggests that this structured schedule of prayer, a feature of liturgical life at the time of Christ, was passed on as a legacy to the Early Church, providing the form, if not the content, for the daily prayers.

Although the Christians no longer shared the temple sacrifices—which had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ—they were devoted to “the” prayers (Acts 2:43) and continued to pray at the customary hours (Acts 10:9), even going to the temple to pray (Acts 3:1).

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAILY OFFICE

The chief purpose for the practice of the Daily Office is the sanctification and marking of time. “Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake” (Mark 13:35–37). In the ancient world, the time between dawn and dusk was divided at recognized points—the third, sixth, and ninth hours—and Christians found it natural to mark the passing of the day with prayer at these times. For the most part, these daytime prayers were private or family prayers within the home. By the middle of the third cen-

tury, the hours of prayer had become commemorations of the work of Christ: daybreak celebrated the resurrection; the third hour, the condemnation of the Christ; the sixth hour, the crucifixion; the ninth hour, Jesus' death; evening, the rest in the tomb or the light of Christ in the darkness of the world. With this development, it became common for the Liturgy of the Hours to be prayed by the congregation gathered together for this purpose. Over time, these divine offices became increasingly elaborate as they became the exclusive property of the monastic communities, since the chief vocation of the monks was that of prayer. By the time of the Reformation, an elaborate system of canonical hours (schedule of prayers ordered by Roman Catholic canon law) was prescribed as part of the monastic vocations and the various orders of the clergy.

Originally the Liturgy of the Hours distributed prayer times throughout the day:



Reforms of the schedule and content of the Daily Office have occurred throughout the centuries since the Reformation, most notably by the Lutherans and the Anglicans.

Both communities greatly simplified the Daily Office; for example, the midnight Office of Matins was aggregated with Lauds. A slightly later development often omitted Prime and celebrated the aggregated Matins/Lauds as the sole early morning prayer service called Matins or Morning Prayer. Vespers and Compline were blended into a single evening service called Vespers or Evensong. The Anglicans and the Lutherans ultimately took different approaches to the reform of the Daily Office. Under the Anglican reforms, the offices retained an essentially monastic character: all 150 psalms are appointed to be read during the course of a month, nearly the entire Bible is read throughout each year, and the priests in the Church of England are required to read Morning and Evening Prayer daily, in their parish churches if possible.

## THE DAILY OFFICE IN THE LUTHERAN TRADITION

Martin Luther took Matins and Vespers out of the monastery and formulated these two prayer services for congregational use. While both services focus on praise and reflection on Scripture, Luther's modifications made Matins and Vespers ideal "preaching services." Lutherans have seldom felt compelled to use all 150 psalms within a prescribed period of time nor do they read the whole Bible each year in the course of these services. As a result, though the rhythm of "daily" prayer (sunrise to sunset) is present, Matins and Vespers as preaching services tend to offer a stronger emphasis on the progress of the Church

Year as the propers for the Sundays and the seasons of the Church Year are used in the services and the sermon. Among Lutherans the other daytime prayer offices were almost completely lost.

In recent generations, the venerable but often ignored forms of prayer have been increasingly recognized as going to the heart of Christian faith and piety—teaching the Church the meaning and practice of prayer. The offices—whether only Morning and Evening Prayer or the inclusion of other daytime prayer offices—not only give us the words and forms for our prayer but also invest the hours of the day with devotional significance, teach us through the Word, and give our experience of time a context of eternity. The whole Church on earth participates in a service of praise to our God. New congregations of God’s people take up the unending song when other communities find their day’s work at an end. So the prayer of the Church goes on, hour by hour, around the world and from generation to generation in an unbroken cycle of praise.

## INDIVIDUAL USE OF THE DAILY OFFICE

The Daily Office is not restricted to gatherings in the church building. By their very nature the prayer offices are personal and meditative. Individuals and households can organize their daily prayers in the pattern of the Daily Office. For example, you currently pray at one time during the day, perhaps individually or with the family in the evening, consider adding Matins or Morning Prayer after breakfast or during

your morning break. If you typically pray in the morning, add Vespers or Evening Prayer as a conclusion to your family dinner. In such a prayer structure, the Psalmody and the Old Testament reading appointed in the *Treasury* can be used in the morning, and the New Testament reading and the additional Psalm can be part of your evening prayer. Another simple addition to your personal prayer schedule is Compline, a brief office designed for use before bedtime to bring the day to a quiet close. It draws the parallel between sleep at night and sleep in death. The same security we have in the promises of God for our eternal well-being are ours as we prepare for our rest at night. Compline takes no more than twenty minutes and settles your mind and heart as you focus on God’s Word and His promises of peace and protection.

Some individuals who use the *Treasury* may have the desire, along with the flexibility in their activities, to follow a fuller schedule of daily prayer. If one wishes to make full use of the Daily Office in the context of the Lutheran tradition, the following schedule can be used:

Prayer Office	Time of Day
Matins or Morning Prayer	beginning of the day
Responsive Prayer 1	midmorning (about 9 a.m.)
The Litany	noon
Responsive Prayer 2	midafternoon (about 3 p.m.)
Vespers or Evening Prayer	sunset
Compline	before going to bed

By using the orders in the section Daily Prayer for Individuals and Families (pp. 000–00), one can construct a schedule of briefer offices as follows:

Prayer Office	Time of Day
Morning	start of the day
Responsive Prayer 1	midmorning
Noon	noon
Responsive Prayer 2 or The Litany	midafternoon
Early Evening	sunset
Close of the Day	before going to bed

### THE PRACTICE OF THE DAILY OFFICE

The Daily Office is not an isolated, individual endeavor. Instead, it is the way an individual participates in the prayer life of the community, the Church. Thus one does not need to feel a burden to participate in a particular office every day or feel guilty because a time of prayer was missed. Rather, when you miss a time you typically set aside for prayer, be conscious that the prayer goes on as the people of God throughout the world call on their dear Father. If you decide to use the Daily Office as a whole or in any part, it is helpful to put time limits on when a particular office is prayed. If, for example, your discipline is to pray the primary hours of Matins/Morning Prayer and Vespers/Evening Prayer, you might decide not to pray Matins after 10 a.m. If you miss the time window, you pick up the discipline again with the next office. In these matters, there are no laws; rather, there is the freedom in

the Gospel to use or not to use the offices according to one’s needs and personal piety.

### SEASONAL USE OF THE DAILY OFFICE

The pattern of prayer according to the Daily Office may also be used for a season in one’s spiritual life. For example, the Daily Office may deepen the observance of Holy Week or enrich a time of personal reflection or repentance such as the Ember Days (see p. 000). The Daily Office also can serve to focus your mind and heart on God as you go through the personal “seasons” of life. Times of distress, stress, tragedy, and illness may become times of spiritual renewal and strengthened faith through the deliberate conversations with God provided by the Daily Office.

# EMBER DAYS

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The Ember Days comprise the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of the week following the first Sunday in Lent;  
the week between Pentecost and Trinity Sunday;  
the week following the Feast of the Holy Cross (September 14); and  
the week following the Commemoration of St. Lucia (December 13).

Traditionally, the Western Church observed four periods, roughly one for each of the natural seasons of the year, seeking God’s blessings upon the fruits of the earth and acknowledging that all food comes from Him. Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving as prescribed by the Church marked the three days of each Embertide.

In the Church of the Reformation, these days marked a season of piety especially devoted to preaching on the catechism.<sup>1</sup> Today the Ember Days can be a time to give special attention to the elements and fundamentals of Christian knowledge and life found in the catechism.

The Ember Days were originally days of prayer, repentance, and fasting. After the Reformation, the Ember Days themselves became for Lutherans one of the roots of the evangelical “days of repentance.”<sup>2</sup> The traditional themes of repentance can be used in one’s daily prayer in a way that is already familiar, as a Day of Supplication and Prayer. (Propers appointed for a Day of Supplication and Prayer can be found in the *Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book*, p. 992.) Hymns of confession and absolution would be suitable. The appointed *lectio continua* readings of daily prayer are retained. In prayers, it would be fitting of the days to ask to be forgiven of guilt (see the Litany), to be spared from punishment (war and other distresses), and to pray the Collect for Peace (Vespers, *Lutheran Service Book*, p. 233).

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1 Martin Brecht writes: “In Wittenberg it appears that Pastor Bugenhagen treated the catechism four times a year. When he was in Brunswick in 1528, Luther substituted for him at the task” (*Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation*, trans. James L. Schaaf [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990], 274). In the editor’s preface to the last of Luther’s 1528 series of sermons on the catechism, we hear Luther: “It has hitherto been our custom to teach the elements and fundamentals of Christian knowledge and life four times each year” (AE 51:135).

2 Paul Graff, *Geschichte der Auflösung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937), 1:138.

For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. *Philippians 2:13*

To all godly Christians who feel and experience in their hearts a small spark or longing for divine grace and eternal salvation this precious passage is very comforting. For they know that God has kindled in their hearts this beginning of true godliness. He will further strengthen and help them in their great weakness to persevere in true faith unto the end [1 Peter 5:10].

Here belong also all the prayers of the saints in which they ask that they may be taught, enlightened, and sanctified by God. By this very act they declare that they cannot get those things that they ask of God from their own natural powers. For example, in Psalm 119 alone, David prays more than ten times that God would give him understanding, that he might rightly comprehend and learn the divine teaching. Similar prayers are in Paul's writings (Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:9; Philippians 1:9). These prayers and passages about our ignorance and inability have been written for us. They are not written to make us idle and remiss in reading, hearing, and meditating on God's Word, but that we should first thank God from the heart that by His Son He has delivered us from the darkness of ignorance and the captivity of sin and death [Ephesians 4:8]. Through Baptism and the Holy Spirit He has regenerated and illumined us.

After God (through the Holy Spirit in Baptism) has kindled and caused a beginning of the true knowledge of God and faith, we should pray to Him without ceasing [1 Thessalonians 5:17]. We should ask that through the same Spirit and His grace, by means of the daily exercise of reading and doing God's Word, He would preserve in us faith and His heavenly gifts, strengthen us from day to day, and keep us to the end. For unless God Himself is our schoolmaster, we can study and learn nothing that is acceptable to Him and helpful to ourselves and others.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 14-16

PROPERS  
*for* DAILY  
PRAYER





# THE TIME OF EASTER

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## LENTEN SEASON

Proper for the Lenten Season for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 00.

### ASH WEDNESDAY

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for | he is good,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever.
- <sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the | God of gods,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever.
- <sup>3</sup> Give thanks to the | Lord of lords,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>4</sup> to him who alone does great | wonders,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>5</sup> to him who by understanding made  
the | heavens,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>6</sup> to him who spread out the earth above  
the | waters,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>7</sup> to him who made the | great lights,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>8</sup> the sun to rule o- | ver the day,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>9</sup> the moon and stars to rule o- | ver the  
night,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- Psalm 136:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 90, Psalm 6*

#### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 1:1–19

The Creation of the World

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

<sup>3</sup>And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” <sup>7</sup>And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. <sup>8</sup>And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>11</sup>And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit

trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. <sup>12</sup>The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

<sup>14</sup>And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, <sup>15</sup>and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. <sup>16</sup>And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. <sup>17</sup>And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 1:1–13

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger  
before your face,  
who will prepare your way,

<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.’”

<sup>4</sup>John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John

was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

#### The Baptism of Jesus

<sup>9</sup>In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup>And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup>And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

#### The Temptation of Jesus

<sup>12</sup>The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup>And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

### Writing

This is what true repentance means. Here a person needs to hear something like this, “You are all of no account, whether you are obvious sinners or saints (in your own opinions). You have to become different from what you are now. You have to act differently than you are now acting, whether you are as great, wise, powerful, and holy as you can be. Here no one is godly.”

But to this office of the Law, the New Testament immediately adds the consoling promise of grace through the Gospel. This must be believed. As Christ declares, “Repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). That is, become different, act differently,

and believe My promise. John the Baptist (preceding Christ) is called a preacher of repentance, but this is for the forgiveness of sins. That is, John was to accuse all and convict them of being sinners. This is so they can know what they are before God and acknowledge that they are lost. So they can be prepared for the Lord [Mark 1:3] to receive grace and to expect and accept from Him the forgiveness of sins. This is what Christ Himself says, “Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in [My] name to all nations” (Luke 24:47).

—Smalcald Articles III III 3–6

### Hymnody

When all the world was cursed  
By Moses’ condemnation,  
Saint John the Baptist came  
With words of consolation.  
With true forerunner’s zeal  
The greater One he named,  
And Him, as yet unknown,  
As Savior he proclaimed.

—When All the World Was Cursed  
(LSB 346:1)

### Prayer of the Day

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. (L22)

### Lent and Ash Wednesday

During the forty days of Lent, God’s baptized people cleanse their hearts through the discipline of Lent: repentance, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Lent is a time in which God’s people prepare with joy for the Paschal Feast (Easter). It is a time in which God renews His people’s zeal in faith and life. It is a time in which we pray that we may be given the fullness of grace that belongs to the children of God.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Introduction

## THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in | all the earth!\*  
You have set your glory  
above the | heavens.

<sup>2</sup> Out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength because | of your foes,\*  
to still the enemy and the a- | venger.

<sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens, the work of your | fingers,\*  
the moon and the stars, which you have | set in place,

<sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mind- | ful of him,\*  
and the son of man that you | care for him?

<sup>5</sup> Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly | beings\*  
and crowned him with glory and | honor.

<sup>6</sup>You have given him dominion over the works | of your hands;\*  
you have put all things under | his feet,

<sup>9</sup>O | LORD, our Lord,\*  
how majestic is your name in | all the earth!

—Psalm 8:1–6, 9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 128, Psalm 32*

### Old Testament Reading:

#### Genesis 1:20–2:3

<sup>20</sup>And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” <sup>21</sup>So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup>And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” <sup>23</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. <sup>25</sup>And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

<sup>27</sup>So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup>And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” <sup>29</sup>And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup>And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. <sup>31</sup>And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

<sup>2:1</sup>Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup>So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 1:14–28

Jesus Begins His Ministry

<sup>14</sup>Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

### Jesus Calls the First Disciples

<sup>16</sup>Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup>And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. <sup>20</sup>And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

### Jesus Heals a Man with an Unclean Spirit

<sup>21</sup>And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. <sup>22</sup>And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup>And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, <sup>24</sup>“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” <sup>25</sup>But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” <sup>26</sup>And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. <sup>27</sup>And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” <sup>28</sup>And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

### Writing

When we see this disagreement clearly, we note that it has been caused chiefly by this: the term *Gospel* is not always used and understood in one and the same sense. It is used in two ways in the Holy Scriptures and also by ancient and modern Church teachers. Sometimes it is used to mean the entire doctrine of Christ, our Lord, which He proclaimed in His ministry on earth and commanded to be proclaimed in the New Testament. Therefore, this includes the explanation of the Law and the proclamation of the favor and grace of God His heavenly Father. For it is written, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). And shortly afterward the chief points are stated: *Repentance and forgiveness of sins*. So when Christ after His resurrection commanded the apostles to “proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15), He compressed the sum of this doctrine into a few words. He also said, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations” (Luke 24:46–47). Paul, too, calls his entire doctrine the Gospel (Acts 20:21). He summarizes this doctrine under two points: *Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*. In this sense the general definition of the word *Gospel*, when used in a wide sense and without the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel, is correctly said to be a preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins. For John, Christ, and the apostles began their preaching with repentance and explained and taught not only the gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins, but also God’s Law. Furthermore, the term *Gospel*

is used in another way. In its proper sense, *Gospel* does not mean the preaching of repentance, but only the preaching of God's grace. This follows directly after the preaching of repentance, as Christ says, "Repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord V 3–6

### Hymnody

Satan, I defy thee;  
Death, I now decry thee;  
Fear, I bid thee cease.  
World, thou shalt not harm me  
Nor thy threats alarm me  
While I sing of peace.  
God's great pow'r  
Guards ev'ry hour;  
Earth and all its depths adore Him,  
Silent bow before Him.

—Jesus, Priceless Treasure (*LSB* 743:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, Holy One of God, You showed that the kingdom of God had come by Your healing the sick and casting out demons. Heal us in both body and soul by the medicine of immortality of Your body and blood that we may truly be Your disciples; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1001)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Summary, Foundation, Rule, and Norm 1–8

## FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> I will give thanks to the LORD with my | whole heart;\*  
I will recount all of your won- | derful deeds.
- <sup>2</sup> I will be glad and ex- | ult in you;\*  
I will sing praise to your name, | O Most High.
- <sup>3</sup> When my enemies | turn back,\*  
they stumble and perish before your | presence.
- <sup>4</sup> For you have maintained my | just cause;\*  
you have sat on the throne, giving righteous | judgment.
- <sup>5</sup> You have rebuked the nations; you have made the wicked | perish;\*  
you have blotted out their name forever and | ever.
- <sup>6</sup> The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins; their cities you | rooted out;\*  
the very memory of them has | perished.
- <sup>7</sup> But the LORD sits enthroned for- | ever;\*  
he has established his throne for | justice,
- <sup>8</sup> and he judges the world with | righteousness;\*  
he judges the peoples with up- | rightness.  
—Psalm 9:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 9, Psalm 38*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 2:4–25

The Creation of Man and Woman

- <sup>4</sup>These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

<sup>5</sup>When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, <sup>6</sup>and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—<sup>7</sup>then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup>And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup>A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup>And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup>The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup>And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” <sup>19</sup>Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the

heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup>So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup>And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup>Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was taken out of Man.”

<sup>24</sup>Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup>And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

## New Testament Reading: Mark 1:29–45

Jesus Heals Many

<sup>29</sup>And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. <sup>30</sup>Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. <sup>31</sup>And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

<sup>32</sup>That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. <sup>33</sup>And the whole city was gathered together at the door. <sup>34</sup>And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

## Jesus Preaches in Galilee

<sup>35</sup>And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

<sup>36</sup>And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, <sup>37</sup>and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.”

<sup>38</sup>And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” <sup>39</sup>And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

## Jesus Cleanses a Leper

<sup>40</sup>And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” <sup>41</sup>Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” <sup>42</sup>And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. <sup>43</sup>And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, <sup>44</sup>and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” <sup>45</sup>But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

**Writing**

The good God permits such small evils to befall us merely in order to arouse us snorers from our deep sleep and to make us recognize, on the other hand, the incomparable and innumerable benefits we still have. He wants us to consider what would happen if He were to withdraw His goodness from us completely. In that spirit

Job said (2:10): “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” . . . [Job] said (Job 1:21): “As God wills, so let it be; the name of the Lord be praised.” He did not simply look at the evil, as we would-be saints do; he kept in sight the goodness and grace of the Lord. With this he comforted himself and overcame evil with patience.

We also are to look at our misfortunes in no other way than that with them God gives us a light by which we may see and understand His goodness and kindness in countless other ways. Then we conclude that such small misfortunes are barely a drop of water on a big fire or a little spark in the ocean. Then we understand and love the words: “O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His steadfast love endures forever!”

—Martin Luther

**Hymnody**

Your touch then, Lord,  
brought life and health,  
Gave speech and strength and sight;  
And youth renewed and frenzy calmed  
Revealed You, Lord of light.  
And now, O Lord, be near to bless,  
Almighty as before,  
In crowded street, by beds of pain,  
As by Gennes’ret’s shore.

—Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old  
(LSB 846:2)

**Prayer of the Day**

O God, You declare Your almighty power above all in showing mercy and pity. Mercifully grant us such a measure of Your grace that we may obtain Your gracious promises and be made partakers of Your

heavenly treasures; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H70)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Summary, Foundation, Rule, and Norm 9–13

## SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>Save, O LORD, for the godly | one is gone;\*  
for the faithful have vanished from  
among the chil- | dren of man.

<sup>2</sup>Everyone utters lies to his | neighbor;\*  
with flattering lips and a double | heart  
they speak.

<sup>3</sup>May the LORD cut off all | flattering lips,\*  
the tongue that | makes great boasts,

<sup>4</sup>those who say, “With our tongue we | will  
prevail,\*  
our lips are with us; who is master | over  
us?”

<sup>5</sup>“Because the poor are plundered, because  
the needy groan, I will now arise,” | says the  
LORD;\*

“I will place him in the safety for | which  
he longs.”

<sup>6</sup>The words of the LORD are | pure words,\*  
like silver refined in a furnace on the  
ground, purified | seven times.

—Psalm 12:1–6

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 14, Psalm 51*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 3:1–24

#### The Fall

<sup>1</sup>Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” <sup>2</sup>And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup>but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” <sup>4</sup>But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup>For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” <sup>6</sup>So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

<sup>8</sup>And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” <sup>10</sup>And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” <sup>11</sup>He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” <sup>12</sup>The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” <sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that

you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

<sup>14</sup>The LORD God said to the serpent,  
 “Because you have done this,  
     cursed are you above all livestock  
     and above all beasts of the field;  
 on your belly you shall go,  
     and dust you shall eat  
     all the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup>I will put enmity between you  
 and the woman,  
     and between your offspring  
     and her offspring;  
 he shall bruise your head,  
     and you shall bruise his heel.”

<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said,  
 “I will surely multiply your pain  
 in childbearing;  
     in pain you shall bring  
     forth children.  
 Your desire shall be for your husband,  
     and he shall rule over you.”

<sup>17</sup>And to Adam he said,  
 “Because you have listened to the voice  
 of your wife  
     and have eaten of the tree  
 of which I commanded you,  
     ‘You shall not eat of it,’  
 cursed is the ground because of you;  
     in pain you shall eat of it  
     all the days of your life;  
<sup>18</sup>thorns and thistles it shall  
 bring forth for you;  
     and you shall eat the plants  
     of the field.

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face  
 you shall eat bread,  
 till you return to the ground,  
     for out of it you were taken;

for you are dust,  
 and to dust you shall return.”

<sup>20</sup>The man called his wife’s name Eve,  
 because she was the mother of all living.  
<sup>21</sup>And the LORD God made for Adam and for  
 his wife garments of skins and clothed them.  
<sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the  
 man has become like one of us in knowing  
 good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his  
 hand and take also of the tree of life and eat,  
 and live forever—” <sup>23</sup>therefore the LORD God  
 sent him out from the garden of Eden to  
 work the ground from which he was taken.  
<sup>24</sup>He drove out the man, and at the east of  
 the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim  
 and a flaming sword that turned every way to  
 guard the way to the tree of life.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 2:1–17

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

<sup>1</sup>And when he returned to Capernaum  
 after some days, it was reported that he was  
 at home. <sup>2</sup>And many were gathered together,  
 so that there was no more room, not even  
 at the door. And he was preaching the word  
 to them. <sup>3</sup>And they came, bringing to him  
 a paralytic carried by four men. <sup>4</sup>And when  
 they could not get near him because of the  
 crowd, they removed the roof above him,  
 and when they had made an opening, they  
 let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.  
<sup>5</sup>And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to  
 the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”  
<sup>6</sup>Now some of the scribes were sitting there,  
 questioning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup>“Why does this  
 man speak like that? He is blaspheming!  
 Who can forgive sins but God alone?” <sup>8</sup>And  
 immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit  
 that they thus questioned within themselves,  
 said to them, “Why do you question these

things in your hearts? <sup>9</sup>Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? <sup>10</sup>But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic—<sup>11</sup>“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” <sup>12</sup>And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

Jesus Calls Levi

<sup>13</sup>He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. <sup>14</sup>And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

<sup>15</sup>And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup>And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” <sup>17</sup>And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

**Writing**

The promise concerning Christ and His benefits was first revealed to Adam immediately after the Fall, so that, even though he had fallen under death and the wrath of God, he yet might have the consolation by which he could know both that God was again and would continue to be favorably inclined toward him and that death

at some point would be overcome. That first promise clearly sets forth these two benefits, even though it seems to be rather obscure to us; but to Adam in his status at that time it was not obscure. “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait for His heel,” Gen. 3:15.

This is a marvelous account, one that can seem ridiculous and fabulous to the ungodly. But the pious will see that the most important matters are here dealt with in the briefest possible way. Here is a description of the beginning of the punishment for sin, that because of sin the devil with his cruel tyranny is going to oppress the human race with sins and death, as the very history of the world testifies and which is all shown in the terrible sentence laid upon Adam.

Then there is added in this verse a brief description of the reign of Christ, that it is in the future, that the seed of the woman is going to crush the head, that is, the kingdom, of the serpent; that is, that He will destroy sin and death. This consolation raises Adam up; he recognizes that he is at peace with God, even though he sees that he is unworthy and unclean. He sees what he has lost, but he awaits that Seed by whom his lost righteousness and eternal life are to be restored to him. This trust in His mercy pleases God. The words that are added, that the devil “will lie in wait for the heel of the Seed,” Adam understood to mean that Christ and the saints will be afflicted in this life but that Christ will nevertheless overcome the kingdom of the devil.

—Philip Melancthon

## Hymnody

O from our sins, Lord, turn Your face;  
Absolve us through Your boundless grace.  
Be with us in our anguish still;  
Free us at last from ev'ry ill.  
—When in the Hour of Deepest Need  
(LSB 615:5)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful Father, You have given Your only Son as the sacrifice for sinners. Grant us grace to receive the fruits of His redeeming work with thanksgiving and daily to follow in His way; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B61)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Summary, Foundation, Rule, and Norm 14–20

## FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

## Psalmody

<sup>5</sup>How long, O LORD? Will you be angry for- | ever?\*

Will your jealousy | burn like fire?

<sup>6</sup>Pour out your anger on the nations that do not | know you,\* and on the kingdoms that do not call up- | on your name!

<sup>7</sup>For they have devoured | Jacob\* and laid waste his habi- | tation.

<sup>8</sup>Do not remember against us our former in- | iquities;\*

let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought | very low.

<sup>9</sup>Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory | of your name;\*

deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your | name's sake!

—Psalm 79:5–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 42, Psalm 102*

## Old Testament Reading: Genesis 4:1–26

Cain and Abel

<sup>1</sup>Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.”

<sup>2</sup>And again, she bore his brother Abel.

Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. <sup>3</sup>In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, <sup>4</sup>and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. <sup>6</sup>The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? <sup>7</sup>If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

<sup>8</sup>Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

<sup>9</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?” <sup>10</sup>And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. <sup>11</sup>And now you are cursed from

the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup>When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." <sup>13</sup>Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. <sup>14</sup>Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." <sup>15</sup>Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. <sup>16</sup>Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

<sup>17</sup>Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. <sup>18</sup>To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. <sup>19</sup>And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. <sup>20</sup>Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. <sup>21</sup>His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. <sup>22</sup>Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

<sup>23</sup>Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
 you wives of Lamech,  
 listen to what I say:  
 I have killed a man for wounding me,  
 a young man for striking me.

<sup>24</sup>If Cain's revenge is sevenfold,  
 then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."

<sup>25</sup>And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." <sup>26</sup>To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 2:18–28

A Question About Fasting

<sup>18</sup>Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" <sup>19</sup>And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. <sup>20</sup>The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. <sup>21</sup>No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. <sup>22</sup>And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins."

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

<sup>23</sup>One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. <sup>24</sup>And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" <sup>25</sup>And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in

need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: <sup>26</sup>how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?” <sup>27</sup>And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup>So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

## Writing

[Our teachers] have always taught that Christians are to bear the cross [Matthew 16:24] by enduring afflictions. This is genuine and sincere subduing of the flesh [1 Peter 2:11], to be crucified with Christ through various afflictions. Furthermore, they teach that every Christian ought to train and subdue himself with bodily restraints, or bodily exercises and labors. Then neither over-indulgence nor laziness may tempt him to sin. But [our teachers] do not teach that we may merit grace or make satisfaction for sins by such exercises. Such outward discipline ought to be taught at all times, not only on a few set days. Christ commands, “Watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness” (Luke 21:34). Also in Matthew 17:21, “This kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting.” Paul also says, “I discipline my body and keep it under control” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Here he clearly shows that he was keeping his body under control, not to merit forgiveness of sins by that discipline, but to keep his body in subjection and prepared for spiritual things, for carrying out the duties of his calling. Therefore, we do not condemn fasting in itself [Isaiah 58:3–7], but the traditions that require certain days and

certain meats, with peril of conscience, as though such works were a necessary service.

Nevertheless, we keep many traditions that are leading to good order [1 Corinthians 14:40] in the Church, such as the order of Scripture lessons in the Mass and the chief holy days. At the same time, we warn people that such observances do not justify us before God, and that it is not sinful if we omit such things, without causing offense. The Fathers knew of such freedom in human ceremonies. In the East they kept Easter at another time than at Rome. When the Romans accused the Eastern Church of schism, they were told by others that such practices do not need to be the same everywhere. Irenaeus says, “Diversity concerning fasting does not destroy the harmony of faith.”

—Augsburg Confession XXVI 31–44

## Hymnody

The Law is good; but since the fall  
Its holiness condemns us all;  
It dooms us for our sin to die  
And has no pow’r to justify.

—The Law of God Is Good and Wise  
(*LSB* 579:5)

## Prayer of the Day

Eternal God, Your Son Jesus Christ is our true Sabbath rest. Help us to keep each day holy by receiving His Word of comfort that we may find our rest in Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B62)

**Lenten Catechesis:  
The Ten Commandments**

You shall have no other gods.

You shall not misuse the name  
of the Lord your God.

Remember the Sabbath day  
by keeping it holy.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not give false testimony against  
your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife,  
or his manservant or maidservant,  
his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs  
to your neighbor.

I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,  
punishing the children for the sin of the  
fathers to the third and fourth generation  
of those who hate Me, but showing love to a  
thousand generations of those who love Me  
and keep My commandments.

[Exodus 20:5–6]

**Suggested Reading from  
the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
I 1–4

**MONDAY—LENT 1**

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup> Why do the | nations rage\*  
and the peoples | plot in vain?

<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and  
the rulers take counsel to- | gether,\*  
against the LORD and against his  
anointed, | saying,

<sup>3</sup> “Let us burst their | bonds apart\*  
and cast away their | cords from us.”

<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the | heavens laughs;\*  
the Lord holds them in de- | rision.

<sup>5</sup> Then he will speak to them | in his wrath,\*  
and terrify them in his fury, | saying,

<sup>6</sup> “As for me, I have | set my King\*  
on Zion, my | holy hill.”

<sup>7</sup> I will tell of | the decree:\*  
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;  
today I have be- | gotten you.

<sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I will make the nations  
your | heritage,\*  
and the ends of the earth your  
pos- | session.

<sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a | rod of iron\*  
and dash them in pieces like a  
potter's | vessel.”

<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O | kings, be wise;\*  
be warned, O rulers | of the earth.

<sup>11</sup> Serve the | LORD with fear,\*  
and rejoice with | trembling.

<sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you  
perish in the way, for his wrath is  
quickly | kindled.\*  
Blessèd are all who take ref- | uge in him.

—Psalm 2

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 77, Psalm 130*

**Old Testament Reading: Genesis 6:1–7:5**

## Increasing Corruption on Earth

<sup>1</sup>When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup>the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. <sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” <sup>4</sup>The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. <sup>7</sup>So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” <sup>8</sup>But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

## Noah and the Flood

<sup>9</sup>These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. <sup>10</sup>And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. <sup>13</sup>And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the

earth. <sup>14</sup>Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. <sup>15</sup>This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. <sup>16</sup>Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. <sup>17</sup>For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die.

<sup>18</sup>But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. <sup>19</sup>And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. <sup>20</sup>Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. <sup>21</sup>Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.” <sup>22</sup>Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

<sup>7:1</sup>Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. <sup>2</sup>Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, <sup>3</sup>and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. <sup>4</sup>For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.” <sup>5</sup>And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

## New Testament Reading: Mark 3:1–19

### A Man with a Withered Hand

<sup>1</sup>Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. <sup>2</sup>And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. <sup>3</sup>And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” <sup>4</sup>And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. <sup>5</sup>And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. <sup>6</sup>The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

### A Great Crowd Follows Jesus

<sup>7</sup>Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea <sup>8</sup>and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. <sup>9</sup>And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him, <sup>10</sup>for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. <sup>11</sup>And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” <sup>12</sup>And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

### The Twelve Apostles

<sup>13</sup>And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. <sup>14</sup>And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach <sup>15</sup>and have authority to cast out

demons. <sup>16</sup>He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); <sup>17</sup>James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); <sup>18</sup>Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, <sup>19</sup>and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

## Writing

In order to raise up Adam after the fall, God gave him this promise when he said to the serpent: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” [Gen. 3:15]. In this word of promise Adam, together with his descendants, was carried as it were in God’s bosom, and by faith in it he was preserved, waiting patiently for the woman who should bruise the serpent’s head, as God had promised. And in that faith and expectation he died, not knowing when or who she would be, yet never doubting that she would come. For such a promise, being the truth of God, preserves even in hell those who believe it and wait for it. After this came another promise, made to Noah—to last until the time of Abraham—when a bow was set in the clouds as a sign of the covenant [Gen. 9:12–17], by faith in which Noah and his descendants found God gracious. After that, he promised Abraham that all the nations should be blessed in his seed [Gen. 22:18]. And this is Abraham’s bosom [Luke 16:22], into which his descendants have been received. Then to Moses and the children of Israel [Deut. 18:18], especially to David [II Sam. 7:12–16], he gave the plainest promise of Christ, and thereby at

last made clear what the promise to the men of old really was. And so it finally came to the most perfect promise of all, that of the new testament, in which, with plain words, life and salvation are freely promised, and actually granted to those who believe the promise.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Lord, 'tis not that I did choose Thee;  
That, I know, could never be;  
For this heart would still refuse Thee  
Had Thy grace not chosen me.  
Thou hast from the sin that stained me  
Washed and cleansed and set me free  
And unto this end ordained me,  
That I ever live to Thee.

—Lord, 'Tis Not That I Did Choose  
Thee (*LSB* 573:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, prepare us for that eternal Sabbath when You will rest in us, just as now You work in us. The rest that we shall enjoy will be Yours, just as the work that we now do is Your work done through us. But You, O Lord, are eternally at work and eternally at rest. It is not time that You see or in time that You move or in time that You rest, yet You make what we see in time. You make time itself and the repose which comes when time ceases; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1002)

### Lenten Catechesis: The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

A god means that from which we are to expect all good and in which we are to take

refuge in all distress. So, to have a God is nothing other than trusting and believing Him with the heart. I have often said that the confidence and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust is right, then your god is also true. On the other hand, if your trust is false and wrong, then you do not have the true God. For these two belong together, faith and God [*Hebrews* 11:6]. Now, I say that whatever you set your heart on and put your trust in is truly your god.

—Large Catechism I 2–3

We are to trust in God alone and look to Him and expect from Him nothing but good, as from one who gives us body, life, food, drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace, and all necessities of both temporal and eternal things. He also preserves us from misfortune. And if any evil befall us, He delivers and rescues us. So it is God alone (as has been said well enough) from whom we receive all good and by whom we are delivered from all evil.

—Large Catechism I 24

Even though we experience much good from other people, whatever we receive by God's command or arrangement is all received from God. For our parents and all rulers and everyone else, with respect to his neighbor, have received from God the command that they should do us all kinds of good. So we receive these blessings not from them, but through them, from God. For creatures are only the hands, channels, and means by which God gives all things. So He gives to the mother breasts and milk to offer to her child, and He gives corn and all kinds of produce from the earth for nourishment

[Psalm 104:27–28; 147:8–9]. None of these blessings could be produced by any creature of itself.

—Large Catechism I 26

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
I 5–15

## TUESDAY—LENT 1

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Bless the LORD, | O my soul!\*

O LORD my God, you are | very great!

You are clothed with splendor and | majesty,\*

<sup>2</sup> covering yourself with light as with a  
garment, stretching out the heavens | like  
a tent.

<sup>3</sup> He lays the beams of his chambers  
on the | waters;\*

he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides  
on the wings | of the wind;

<sup>4</sup> he makes his mes- | sengers winds,\*  
his ministers a | flaming fire.

<sup>5</sup> He set the earth on its foun- | dations,\*  
so that it should nev- | er be moved.

<sup>6</sup> You covered it with the deep as  
with a | garment;\*,  
the waters stood above the | mountains.

<sup>7</sup> At your re- | buke they fled;\*,  
at the sound of your thunder  
they | took to flight.

<sup>8</sup> The mountains rose,  
the valleys | sank down\*  
to the place that you appoint- | ed  
for them.

<sup>9</sup> You set a boundary that they | may  
not pass,\*  
so that they might not again cov- | er  
the earth.

—Psalm 104:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 124, Psalm 143*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 7:11–8:12

<sup>11</sup>In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. <sup>12</sup>And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

<sup>13</sup>On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, <sup>14</sup>they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. <sup>15</sup>They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. <sup>16</sup>And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

<sup>17</sup>The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. <sup>18</sup>The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. <sup>19</sup>And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. <sup>20</sup>The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep.

<sup>21</sup>And all flesh died that moved on the earth,

birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind.

<sup>22</sup>Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. <sup>23</sup>He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. <sup>24</sup>And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

The Flood Subsides

<sup>8:1</sup>But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. <sup>2</sup>The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, <sup>3</sup>and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, <sup>4</sup>and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. <sup>5</sup>And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

<sup>6</sup>At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made <sup>7</sup>and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.

<sup>8</sup>Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. <sup>9</sup>But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him.

<sup>10</sup>He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. <sup>11</sup>And the dove came back to him in the evening, and

behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. <sup>12</sup>Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 3:20–35

<sup>20</sup>Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. <sup>21</sup>And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

<sup>22</sup>And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” <sup>23</sup>And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? <sup>24</sup>If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup>And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. <sup>26</sup>And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. <sup>27</sup>But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

<sup>28</sup>“Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, <sup>29</sup>but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”—<sup>30</sup>for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Jesus’ Mother and Brothers

<sup>31</sup>And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. <sup>32</sup>And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.”

<sup>33</sup>And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" <sup>34</sup>And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!

<sup>35</sup>For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

### Writing

Ah now, my God, thus do I fall  
Assured into thy bosom.

Thus speaks the soul which trusts in God  
When he the Savior's brotherhood  
And God's good faith in faith doth praise.  
Take me and work thy will with me  
Until my life is finished.

I know for sure  
That I unailing blest shall be  
If my distress, and this my grief and woe,  
By thee will thus an end be granted:  
For thou dost know that to my soul  
Thereby its help ariseth,  
That in my earthly lifetime,  
To Satan's discontent,  
Thy heav'nly realm in me be manifest  
And thine own honor more and more  
Be of itself exalted.

Thus may my heart as thou commandest  
Find, O my Jesus, blessed stillness,  
And I may to these muted lyres  
The Prince of peace a new refrain now offer.

To my shepherd I'll be true.  
Though he fill my cross's chalice,  
I'll rest fully in his pleasure,  
He stands in my sorrow near.  
One day, surely, done my weeping,  
Jesus' sun again will brighten.  
To my shepherd I'll be true.  
Live in Jesus, who will rule me;  
Heart, be glad, though thou must perish,

Jesus hath enough achieved.  
Amen: Father, take me now!

If I then, too, the way of death  
And its dark journey travel,  
Lead on! I'll walk the road and path  
Which thine own eyes have shown me.  
Thou art my shepherd, who all things  
Will bring to such conclusion,  
That I one day within thy courts  
Thee ever more may honor.  
—Johann Sebastian Bach

### Hymnody

Jesus has come and brings pleasure eternal,  
Alpha, Omega, Beginning and End;  
Godhead, humanity, union supernal,  
O great Redeemer, You come as our friend!  
Heaven and earth, now proclaim  
this great wonder:  
Jesus has come and brings pleasure eternal!  
—Jesus Has Come and Brings Pleasure  
(LSB 533:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, Your Son  
Jesus triumphed over the prince of demons  
and freed us from bondage to sin. Help us to  
stand firm against every assault of Satan, and  
enable us always to do Your will; through  
Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns  
with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now  
and forever. (B63)

### Lenten Catechesis:

#### The Second and Third Commandments

You shall not misuse the name of the  
Lord your God.

If someone now asks, "How do you  
understand the Second Commandment?"

or “What is meant by taking God’s name in vain, or misusing God’s name?” answer briefly in this way: “It means misusing God’s name when we call upon the Lord God—no matter how—in order to deceive or do wrong of any kind.” Therefore, this commandment makes this point: God’s name must not be appealed to falsely, or taken upon our lips, while the heart knows well enough—or should know—that the truth of the matter is different. . . . God’s name cannot be misused worse than for the support of falsehood and deceit.

—Large Catechism I 51–52

But the greatest abuse occurs in spiritual matters. These have to do with the conscience, when false preachers rise up and offer their lying vanities as God’s Word [Jonah 2:8].

—Large Catechism I 54

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

This is the simplest meaning of the [third] commandment: People must have holidays. Therefore, such observances should be devoted to hearing God’s Word so that the special function of the day of rest should be the ministry of the Word for the young and the mass of poor people [Nehemiah 8:2–3, 8]. Yet the resting should not be strictly understood to forbid any work that comes up, which cannot be avoided. . . .

“To sanctify the holy day is the same as to keep it holy.” “But what is meant by keeping it holy?” “Nothing else than to be occupied with holy words, works, and life.” . . . God desires the day to be holy to you. Therefore, it becomes holy or unholy because of you, whether you are occupied on that day with things that are holy or unholy.

—Large Catechism I 86–87

God’s Word is the true “holy thing” [*Heiligtum*; relic] above all holy things. Yes, it is the only one we Christians know and have. . . . God’s Word is the treasure that sanctifies everything [1 Timothy 4:5]. . . . Whenever God’s Word is taught, preached, heard, read, or meditated upon, then the person, day, and work are sanctified. This is not because of the outward work, but because of the Word, which makes saints of us all.

—Large Catechism I 91–92

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord I 16–32

## WEDNESDAY—LENT 1

### Psalmody

<sup>10</sup> How long, O God, is the | foe to scoff?\*  
Is the enemy to revile your name  
for- | ever?

<sup>11</sup> Why do you hold back your hand,  
your | right hand?\*  
Take it from the fold of your garment  
and de- | stroy them!

<sup>12</sup> Yet God my King is | from of old,\*  
working salvation in the midst | of  
the earth.

<sup>13</sup> You divided the sea | by your might;\*  
you broke the heads of the sea monsters  
on the | waters.

<sup>14</sup> You crushed the heads of Le- | viathan,\*  
you gave him as food for the creatures of  
the | wilderness.

<sup>15</sup> You split open | springs and brooks;\*  
you dried up ever- | flowing streams.

<sup>16</sup>Yours is the day, yours al- | so the night;\*  
you have established the heavenly  
lights | and the sun.

<sup>17</sup>You have fixed all the boundaries | of  
the earth;\*  
you have made summer and | winter.

—Psalm 74:10–17

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 126, Psalm 6*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 8:13–9:17

<sup>13</sup>In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. <sup>14</sup>In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. <sup>15</sup>Then God said to Noah, <sup>16</sup>“Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. <sup>17</sup>Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” <sup>18</sup>So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. <sup>19</sup>Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

God’s Covenant with Noah

<sup>20</sup>Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup>And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither

will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. <sup>22</sup>While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

<sup>9:1</sup>And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup>The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. <sup>3</sup>Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. <sup>4</sup>But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. <sup>5</sup>And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

<sup>6</sup>“Whoever sheds the blood of man,  
by man shall his blood be shed,  
for God made man in his own image.

<sup>7</sup>And you, be fruitful and multiply, teem on the earth and multiply in it.”

<sup>8</sup>Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, <sup>9</sup>“Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. <sup>11</sup>I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” <sup>12</sup>And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: <sup>13</sup>I have set my bow in the

cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” <sup>17</sup>God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

*Additional Reading: Genesis 9:18–11:26*

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 4:1–20**

The Parable of the Sower

<sup>1</sup>Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. <sup>2</sup>And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: <sup>3</sup>“Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. <sup>5</sup>Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. <sup>8</sup>And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” <sup>9</sup>And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

The Purpose of the Parables

<sup>10</sup>And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. <sup>11</sup>And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, <sup>12</sup>so that

“they may indeed see but not perceive,  
and may indeed hear but not  
understand,  
lest they should turn and be forgiven.”

<sup>13</sup>And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? <sup>14</sup>The sower sows the word. <sup>15</sup>And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. <sup>16</sup>And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup>And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. <sup>18</sup>And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, <sup>19</sup>but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>20</sup>But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

### **Writing**

God’s Word testifies that the intellect, heart, and will of the natural, unregenerate person in divine things are not only turned entirely away from God, but also are turned and perverted against God

to every evil. Also, a person is not only weak, incapable, unfit, and dead to good, but is also sadly perverted, infected, and corrupted by original sin so that he is entirely evil, perverse, and hostile to God by his disposition and nature. He is very strong, alive, and active in everything that is displeasing and contrary to God.

For the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. (Genesis 8:21)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

St. Paul explains this passage for Jeremiah, writing,

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God. (Romans 8:7)

. . . For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. (Romans 7:18)

For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. (Romans 7:22–23)

The natural or fleshly free will in St. Paul and in other regenerate people strives against God's Law, even after regeneration. Was it not much more stubborn and hostile to God's Law and will before regeneration? Therefore, this is clear (as it is further declared in the article about original sin, to which we now refer for the sake of brevity): (a) the free will, from its own natural powers, cannot work or agree to work anything for its own conversion, righteousness, and salvation, nor follow, believe, or agree with

the Holy Spirit, who through the Gospel offers a person grace and salvation; (b) from its inborn, wicked, rebellious nature it resists God and His will with hostility, unless it is enlightened and controlled by God's Spirit.

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord II 17–18

### Hymnody

So when the precious seed is sown,  
Life-giving grace bestow  
That all whose souls the truth receive  
Its saving pow'r may know.

—Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast  
(LSB 577:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and merciful God, of Your bountiful goodness keep from us all things that may hurt us that we, being ready in both body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish whatever You would have us do; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H79)

### Lenten Catechesis:

#### The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

To the position of fatherhood and motherhood God has given special distinction above all positions that are beneath it: He does not simply command us to love our parents, but to honor them. . . . Honor includes not only love, but also modesty, humility, and submission to a majesty hidden in them. Honor requires not only that parents be addressed kindly and with reverence, but also that, both in the

heart and with the body, we demonstrate that we value them very highly, and that, next to God, we regard them as the very highest.

—Large Catechism I 105–107

In this commandment belongs a further statement about all kinds of obedience to persons in authority who have to command and to govern. For all authority flows and is born from the authority of parents. Where a father is unable alone to educate his ‹rebellious and irritable› child, he uses a schoolmaster to teach the child. If he is too weak, he gets the help of friends and neighbors. If he departs this life, he delegates and confers his authority and government upon others who are appointed for the purpose.

—Large Catechism I 141

The same should also be said about obedience to civil government. . . . Here “father” is not one person from a single family, but it means the many people the father has as tenants, citizens, or subjects. Through them, as through our parents, God gives to us food, house and home, protection, and security. They bear such name and title with all honor as their highest dignity that it is our duty to honor them and to value them greatly as the dearest treasure and the most precious jewel upon earth.

—Large Catechism I 150

Besides these there are still spiritual fathers. . . . The only ones called spiritual fathers are those who govern and guide us by God’s Word. In this sense, St. Paul boasts his fatherhood in 1 Corinthians 4:15, where he says, “I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” Now, since they are

fathers, they are entitled to their honor, even above all others.

—Large Catechism I 158–160

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
I 33–42

## THURSDAY—LENT 1

### Psalmody

- <sup>23</sup> Some went down to the | sea in ships,\*  
doing business on the great | waters;
- <sup>24</sup> they saw the deeds | of the LORD,\*  
his wondrous works | in the deep.
- <sup>25</sup> For he commanded and raised the | stormy  
wind,\*  
which lifted up the waves | of the sea.
- <sup>26</sup> They mounted up to heaven; they went  
down | to the depths;\*  
their courage melted away in their | evil  
plight;
- <sup>27</sup> they reeled and staggered like | drunken  
men\*  
and were at their | wits’ end.
- <sup>28</sup> Then they cried to the LORD  
in their | trouble,\*  
and he delivered them from | their  
distress.
- <sup>29</sup> He made the | storm be still,\*  
and the waves of the | sea were hushed.
- <sup>30</sup> Then they were glad that the waters  
were | quiet,\*  
and he brought them to their  
desired | haven.
- <sup>31</sup> Let them thank the LORD  
for his | steadfast love,\*  
for his wondrous works  
to the chil- | dren of men!

<sup>32</sup>Let them extol him in the congregation  
of the | people,\*  
and praise him in the assembly  
of the | elders.

—Psalm 107:23–32

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 47, Psalm 32*

## Old Testament Reading:

### Genesis 11:27–12:20

#### Terah's Descendants

<sup>27</sup>Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. <sup>28</sup>Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. <sup>29</sup>And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. <sup>30</sup>Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.

<sup>31</sup>Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. <sup>32</sup>The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

#### The Call of Abram

<sup>12:1</sup>Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

<sup>4</sup>So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. <sup>5</sup>And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, <sup>6</sup>Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup>From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. <sup>9</sup>And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

#### Abram and Sarai in Egypt

<sup>10</sup>Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. <sup>11</sup>When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, <sup>12</sup>and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. <sup>13</sup>Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake." <sup>14</sup>When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. <sup>15</sup>And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. <sup>16</sup>And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep,

oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

<sup>17</sup>But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. <sup>18</sup>So Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? <sup>19</sup>Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." <sup>20</sup>And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 4:21–41

#### A Lamp Under a Basket

<sup>21</sup>And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? <sup>22</sup>For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. <sup>23</sup>If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." <sup>24</sup>And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. <sup>25</sup>For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

#### The Parable of the Seed Growing

<sup>26</sup>And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. <sup>27</sup>He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. <sup>28</sup>The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. <sup>29</sup>But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

#### The Parable of the Mustard Seed

<sup>30</sup>And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? <sup>31</sup>It is like a grain

of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, <sup>32</sup>yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

<sup>33</sup>With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. <sup>34</sup>He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

#### Jesus Calms a Storm

<sup>35</sup>On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." <sup>36</sup>And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup>And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. <sup>38</sup>But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" <sup>39</sup>And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup>He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" <sup>41</sup>And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

### Writing

But now there follows that promise which should be written in golden letters and should be extolled in the languages of all people, for it offers eternal treasures. For it cannot be understood in a material sense, namely, that it would be confined to this people only, as the previous blessings were. But if, as the words clearly indicate, this

promise is to be extended to all nations, or families of the earth, who else, shall we say, has dispensed this blessing among all nations except the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ?

. . . The statement of the text, “all the families of the earth,” is not to be understood of extent only, of the families of one time, but of duration, as long as the world will stand. . . . This blessing . . . will endure until the end of the world, since the gates of hell (Matt. 16:18), tyrants, and ungodly men will oppose it and rage against it in vain. . . .

Therefore it is proper for us to contrast the blessing in this passage with the curse under which all human beings are because of sin. The curse has been taken away by Christ, and a blessing will be bestowed on all who receive Him and believe in His name. The remarkable blessing is this, that after being freed from sin, from death, and from the tyranny of the devil, we are in the company of the angels of God and have become partakers of eternal life. . . .

In these few simple words the Holy Spirit has thus encompassed the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God. The holy patriarchs and prophets explained this more fully later on in their sermons, namely, that through the Son of God the entire world would be made free, hell and death would be destroyed, the Law would be abrogated, sins would be forgiven, and eternal salvation and life would be given freely to those who believe in Him.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Lord, when the tempest rages,  
I need not fear,  
For You, the Rock of Ages,  
Are always near.  
Close by Your side abiding,  
I fear no foe,  
For when Your hand is guiding,  
In peace I go.

—Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me  
(LSB 722:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B64)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Fifth and Sixth Commandments

You shall not murder.

The entire sum of what it means *not to murder* is to be impressed most clearly upon the simpleminded [Deuteronomy 6:7]. In the first place, we must harm no one, either with our hand or by deed. We must not use our tongue to instigate or counsel harm. We must neither use nor agree to use any means or methods by which another person may be injured. Finally, the heart must not be ill disposed toward anyone or wish another person ill in anger and hatred. Then body and soul may be innocent toward everyone,

but especially toward those who wish you evil or inflict such things upon you.

—Large Catechism I 188

It is God's ultimate purpose that we let harm come to no one, but show him all good and love. . . . He would ever remind us to reflect upon the First Commandment—He is our God, which means He will help, assist, and protect us in order that He may quench the desire of revenge in us.

—Large Catechism I 193, 195

You shall not commit adultery.

[The last five commandments begin by talking] about our neighbor personally. Then they proceed to talk about the person nearest him, or the closest possession next after his body, namely, his wife. She is one flesh and blood with him [Genesis 2:23–24], so that we cannot inflict a higher injury upon him in any good that is his. Therefore, it is clearly forbidden here to bring any disgrace upon our neighbor regarding his wife.

—Large Catechism I 200–201

Among us there is such a shameful mess and the very dregs of all vice and lewdness. [The sixth] commandment is directed against all kinds of unchastity, whatever it may be called. Not only is the outward act of adultery forbidden, but also every kind of cause, motive, and means of adultery. Then the heart, the lips, and the whole body may be chaste and offer no opportunity, help, or persuasion toward in chastity. Not only this, but we must also resist temptation, offer protection, and rescue honor wherever there is danger and need. . . . To speak in the briefest way . . . everyone must live chastely himself and help his neighbor do the same.

—Large Catechism I 202–205

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord I 43–49

### FRIDAY—LENT 1

#### Psalmody

<sup>25</sup> Whom have I in | heaven but you?\*  
And there is nothing on earth  
that I desire be- | sides you.

<sup>26</sup> My flesh and my | heart may fail,\*  
but God is the strength of my heart  
and my portion for- | ever.

<sup>27</sup> For behold, those who are far  
from you shall | perish;\*  
you put an end to everyone  
who is unfaithful | to you.

<sup>28</sup> But for me it is good to be | near God;\*  
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,  
that I may tell of | all your works.

—Psalm 73:25–28

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 133, Psalm 38*

#### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 13:1–18

Abram and Lot Separate

<sup>1</sup>So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

<sup>2</sup>Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. <sup>3</sup>And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, <sup>4</sup>to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, <sup>6</sup>so that the land

could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together,<sup>7</sup> and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.

<sup>8</sup>Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. <sup>9</sup>Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left."<sup>10</sup>And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)<sup>11</sup>So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. <sup>12</sup>Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. <sup>13</sup>Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, <sup>15</sup>for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. <sup>16</sup>I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. <sup>17</sup>Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."<sup>18</sup>So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

*Additional Reading: Genesis 14:1–24*

## New Testament Reading: Mark 5:1–20

Jesus Heals a Man with a Demon

<sup>1</sup>They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. <sup>2</sup>And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. <sup>3</sup>He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, <sup>4</sup>for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. <sup>5</sup>Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. <sup>6</sup>And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. <sup>7</sup>And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me."<sup>8</sup>For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" <sup>9</sup>And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many."<sup>10</sup>And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. <sup>11</sup>Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, <sup>12</sup>and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them."<sup>13</sup>So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered the pigs, and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and were drowned in the sea.

<sup>14</sup>The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. <sup>15</sup>And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. <sup>16</sup>And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the

demon-possessed man and to the pigs. <sup>17</sup>And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. <sup>18</sup>As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. <sup>19</sup>And he did not permit him but said to him, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” <sup>20</sup>And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

## Writing

We teach that it is necessary to do good works. This does not mean that we merit grace by doing good works, but [they are necessary and we should do them] because it is God’s will [Ephesians 2:10]. It is only by faith, and nothing else, that forgiveness of sins is apprehended. The Holy Spirit is received through faith, hearts are renewed and given new affections, and then they are able to bring forth good works. Ambrose says: “Faith is the mother of a good will and doing what is right.” Without the Holy Spirit people are full of ungodly desires. They are too weak to do works that are good in God’s sight [John 15:5]. Besides, they are in the power of the devil, who pushes human beings into various sins, ungodly opinions, and open crimes. We see this in the philosophers, who, although they tried to live an honest life could not succeed, but were defiled with many open crimes. Such is human weakness, without faith and without the Holy Spirit, when governed only by human strength.

Therefore, it is easy to see that this doctrine is not to be accused of banning good works. Instead, it is to be commended all the more because it shows how we are

enabled to do good works. For without faith, human nature cannot, in any way, do the works of the First or Second Commandment [1 Corinthians 2:14]. Without faith, human nature does not call upon God, nor expect anything from Him, nor bear the cross [Matthew 16:24]. Instead, human nature seeks and trusts in human help. So when there is no faith and trust in God, all kinds of lusts and human intentions rule in the heart [Genesis 6:5]. This is why Christ says, “Apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). That is why the Church sings: “Lacking Your divine favor, there is nothing in man. Nothing in him is harmless.”

—Augsburg Confession XX 27–40

## Hymnody

Manifest in making whole  
Palsied limbs and fainting soul;  
Manifest in valiant fight,  
Quelling all the devil’s might;  
Manifest in gracious will,  
Ever bringing good from ill;  
Anthems be to Thee addressed,  
God in man made manifest.

—Songs of Thankfulness and Praise  
(LSB 394:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, Son of the Most High God, You freed many from their bondage to demons, demonstrating Your power over the evil one. Show us Your mercy when we are overcome by the darkness of sin, death, and the devil, and protect us by Your mighty Word that does what it says; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1003)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Seventh and Eighth Commandments

You shall not steal.

God also wants property protected. He has commanded that no one shall take away from, or diminish, his neighbor's possessions. For to steal is nothing else than to get possession of another's property wrongfully.

—Large Catechism I 223–224

Consider a manservant or maidservant who does not serve faithfully in the house, does damage, or allows damage to be done when it could be prevented. He ruins and neglects the goods entrusted to him, by laziness, idleness, or hate, to the spite and sorrow of master and mistress. In whatever way this can be done purposely (I'm not talking about what happens by mistake and against one's will), you can in a year steal thirty or forty florins.

—Large Catechism I 225

This is what is forbidden: (a) To do our neighbor any injury or wrong (in any conceivable manner, by impeding, hindering, and withholding his possessions and property), or even to consent or allow such injury. Instead, we should interfere

and prevent it. (b) It is commanded that we advance and improve his possessions. When they suffer lack, we should help, share, and lend both to friends and foes [Matthew 5:42].

—Large Catechism I 250

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Over and above our own body, spouse, and temporal possessions, we still have another treasure—honor and good reputation [Proverbs 22:1]. . . . It is intolerable to live among people in open shame and general contempt. Therefore, God does not want the reputation, good name, and upright character of our neighbor to be taken away or diminished.

—Large Catechism I 255–256

[The eighth commandment] forbids all sins of the tongue [James 3], by which we may injure or confront our neighbor. . . . God prohibits whatever is done with the tongue against a fellow man. This applies to false preachers with their doctrine and blasphemy, false judges and witnesses with their verdict, or outside of court by lying and speaking evil. Here belongs the detestable, shameful vice of speaking behind a person's back and slandering, to which the devil spurs us on, and of which much could be said. For it is a common evil plague that everyone prefers hearing evil more than hearing good about his neighbor.

—Large Catechism I 263–264

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
I 50–57

## SATURDAY—LENT 1

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>Blessèd is the one whose transgression  
is for- | given,\*  
whose sin is | covered.

<sup>2</sup>Blessèd is the man against whom the Lord  
counts no in- | iquity,\*  
and in whose spirit there is | no deceit.

<sup>3</sup>For when I kept silent,  
my bones wast- | ed away\*  
through my groaning | all day long.

<sup>4</sup>For day and night your hand  
was heavy up- | on me,\*  
my strength was dried up  
as by the heat of | summer.

<sup>5</sup>I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not cover my in- | iquity;\*  
I said, “I will confess my transgressions  
to the LORD,” and you forgave the  
iniquity | of my sin.  
—Psalm 32:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 3, Psalm 51*

## Old Testament Reading: Genesis 15:1–21

Abram Rescues Lot

<sup>1</sup>In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, <sup>2</sup>these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). <sup>3</sup>And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). <sup>4</sup>Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. <sup>5</sup>In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the

Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, <sup>6</sup>and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. <sup>7</sup>Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar.

<sup>8</sup>Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim <sup>9</sup>with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. <sup>10</sup>Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country.

<sup>11</sup>So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. <sup>12</sup>They also took Lot, the son of Abram’s brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

<sup>13</sup>Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram. <sup>14</sup>When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. <sup>15</sup>And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. <sup>16</sup>Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.

Abram Blessed by Melchizedek

<sup>17</sup>After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). <sup>18</sup>And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) <sup>19</sup>And he blessed him and said,

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,  
 Possessor of heaven and earth;  
<sup>20</sup>and blessed be God Most High,  
 who has delivered your enemies into  
 your hand!”

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. <sup>21</sup>And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.”

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 5:21–43**

Jesus Heals a Woman and Jairus's Daughter

<sup>21</sup>And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. <sup>22</sup>Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet <sup>23</sup>and implored him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.” <sup>24</sup>And he went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. <sup>25</sup>And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, <sup>26</sup>and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. <sup>27</sup>She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. <sup>28</sup>For she said, “If

I touch even his garments, I will be made well.” <sup>29</sup>And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. <sup>30</sup>And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my garments?” <sup>31</sup>And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’” <sup>32</sup>And he looked around to see who had done it. <sup>33</sup>But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup>And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

<sup>35</sup>While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” <sup>36</sup>But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” <sup>37</sup>And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. <sup>38</sup>They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup>And when he had entered, he said to them, “Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.” <sup>40</sup>And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. <sup>41</sup>Taking her by the hand he said to her, “Talitha cumi,” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” <sup>42</sup>And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. <sup>43</sup>And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

## Writing

Here, in the most appropriate place, the Holy Spirit wanted to set forth expressly and clearly the statement that righteousness is nothing else than believing God when He makes a promise.

At this point there arises an important debate concerning the Law and faith: whether the Law justifies, whether faith does away with the Law, etc.

In this connection Paul learnedly stresses the matter of time: that in this chapter Moses is speaking about righteousness and a righteous or justified Abraham prior to the Law, prior to the works of the Law, yes, prior to the people of the Law and before Moses, the lawgiver, was born. Accordingly, he says that righteousness is not only not from the Law but is prior to the Law, and that neither the Law nor the works of the Law contribute anything toward it.

Then what? Is the Law useless for righteousness? Yes, certainly. But does faith alone, without works, justify? Yes, certainly. Otherwise you must repudiate Moses, who declares that Abraham is righteous prior to the Law and prior to the works of the Law, not because he sacrificed his son, who had not yet been born, and not because he did this or that work, but because he believed God who gave a promise.

In this passage no mention is made of any preparation for grace, of any faith formed through works, or of any preceding disposition. This, however, is mentioned: that at that time Abraham was in the midst of sins, doubts, and fears, and was exceedingly troubled in spirit.

How, then, did he obtain righteousness? In this way: God speaks, and Abraham believes what God is saying. Moreover, the

Holy Spirit comes as a trustworthy witness and declares that this very believing or this very faith is righteousness or is imputed by God Himself as righteousness and is regarded by Him as such.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

In the midst of death's dark vale  
Pow'rs of hell o'ertake us.  
Who will help when they assail,  
Who secure will make us?  
Thou only, Lord, Thou only!  
Thy heart is moved with tenderness,  
Pities us in our distress.  
Holy and righteous God!  
Holy and mighty God!  
Holy and all-merciful Savior!  
Eternal Lord God!  
Save us from the terror  
Of the fiery pit of hell.  
Have mercy, O Lord!

—In the Very Midst of Life (*LSB* 755:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, during His earthly ministry Your Son Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead. By the healing medicine of the Word and Sacraments pour into our hearts such love toward You that we may live eternally; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B66)

## Lenten Catechesis:

### The Ninth and Tenth Commandments

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox

or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

[According to the last two commandments,] no one should consider or intend to get what belongs to another, such as his wife, servants, house and estate, land, meadows, cattle. He should not take them even with a show of right, by a trick, or to his neighbor's harm. . . . Here it is also forbidden for you to alienate anything from your neighbor, even though you could do so with honor in the eyes of the world, so that no one could accuse or blame you as though you had gotten it wrongfully.

—Large Catechism I 296

We must know that God does not want you to deprive your neighbor of anything that belongs to him, so that he suffer the loss and you gratify your greed with it. . . . If it is not called stealing and cheating, it is still called coveting your neighbor's property, that is, aiming at possession of it, luring it away from him without his consent, and being unwilling to see him enjoy what God has granted him. Even though the judge and everyone must let you keep it, God will not let you keep it.

—Large Catechism I 307–308

Now we have the Ten Commandments, a summary of divine teaching about what we are to do in order that our whole life may be pleasing to God. Everything that is to be a good work must arise and flow from and in this true fountain and channel. So apart from the Ten Commandments no work or thing can be good or pleasing to God, no matter how great or precious it is in the world's eyes.

—Large Catechism I 311

God demands that all our works proceed from a heart that fears and regards God alone. From such fear the heart avoids everything that is contrary to His will, lest it should move Him to wrath. And, on the other hand, the heart also trusts in Him alone and from love for Him does all He wants. For He speaks to us as friendly as a father and offers us all grace and every good.

—Large Catechism I 323

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord I 58–62

## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

### Psalmody

<sup>7</sup> Where shall I go from your | Spirit?\*

Or where shall I flee  
from your | presence?

<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, | you are there!\*

If I make my bed in Sheol, | you  
are there!

<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the | morning\*  
and dwell in the uttermost parts | of  
the sea,

<sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall | lead me,\*  
and your right hand shall | hold me.

—Psalm 139:7–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 139, Psalm 102*

## Old Testament Reading: Genesis 16:1–9, 15–17:22

Sarai and Hagar

<sup>1</sup>Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. <sup>2</sup>And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. <sup>3</sup>So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. <sup>4</sup>And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. <sup>5</sup>And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" <sup>6</sup>But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.

<sup>7</sup>The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. <sup>8</sup>And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." <sup>9</sup>The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." . . .

<sup>15</sup>And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. <sup>16</sup>Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision

<sup>17:1</sup>When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, <sup>2</sup>that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." <sup>3</sup>Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, <sup>4</sup>"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup>No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup>And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. <sup>8</sup>And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

<sup>9</sup>And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. <sup>10</sup>This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup>You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. <sup>12</sup>He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, <sup>13</sup>both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall

my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. <sup>14</sup>Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

Isaac’s Birth Promised

<sup>15</sup>And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” <sup>17</sup>Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” <sup>18</sup>And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before you!” <sup>19</sup>God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. <sup>20</sup>As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. <sup>21</sup>But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.”

<sup>22</sup>When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 6:1–13

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

<sup>1</sup>He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup>And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom

given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? <sup>3</sup>Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. <sup>4</sup>And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” <sup>5</sup>And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. <sup>6</sup>And he marveled because of their unbelief.

And he went about among the villages teaching.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles

<sup>7</sup>And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. <sup>8</sup>He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts—<sup>9</sup>but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup>And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. <sup>11</sup>And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” <sup>12</sup>So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. <sup>13</sup>And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

### Writing

The adversaries understand priesthood not about the ministry of the Word, and giving out the Sacraments to others, but as referring to sacrifice. . . . We teach that the sacrifice of Christ dying on the cross has been enough for the sins of the whole world. There is no need for other sacrifices, as

though Christ's sacrifice were not enough for our sins. So people are justified not because of any other sacrifices, but because of this one sacrifice of Christ, if they believe that they have been redeemed by this sacrifice. So they are called priests, not in order to make any sacrifices for the people as in the Law, that by these [sacrifices] they may merit forgiveness of sins for the people. Rather, they are called to teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments to the people. Nor do we have another priesthood like the Levitical, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches well enough [Hebrews 8]. But if ordination is understood as carrying out the ministry of the Word, we are willing to call ordination a Sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has God's command and has glorious promises, "The gospel . . . is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Likewise, "So shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose" (Isaiah 55:11). If ordination is understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the laying on of hands a Sacrament. For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry and is present in the ministry <that God will preach and work through men and those who have been chosen by men>. It is helpful, so far as can be done, to honor the ministry of the Word with every kind of praise against fanatical people. These fanatics imagine that the Holy Spirit is given not through the Word, but through certain preparations of their own.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession XIII (VII) 7–13

## Hymnody

Anoint them prophets, men who are intent  
To be Your witnesses in word and deed,  
Their hearts aflame, their lips made eloquent,  
Their eyes awake to ev'ry human need.

—God of the Prophets, Bless the  
Prophets' Sons (*LSB* 682:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L24)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth.

And [I believe] 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.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
II 1–4

**MONDAY—LENT 2**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>9</sup> Because you have made the LORD  
your | dwelling place—\*  
the Most High, who is my | refuge—  
<sup>10</sup> no evil shall be allowed to be- | fall you,\*  
no plague come | near your tent.  
<sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels  
con- | cerning you\*  
to guard you in | all your ways.  
<sup>12</sup> On their hands they will | bear you up,\*  
lest you strike your foot  
a- | gainst a stone.  
<sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the | adder;\*  
the young lion and the serpent  
you will trample | underfoot.  
<sup>14</sup> “Because he holds fast to me in love,  
I will de- | liver him;\*  
I will protect him,  
because he | knows my name.  
<sup>15</sup> When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
I will be with him in | trouble;\*  
I will rescue him and | honor him.  
<sup>16</sup> With long life I will sat- | isfy him\*  
and show him my sal- | vation.”  
—Psalm 91:9–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 91, Psalm 130*

**Old Testament Reading: Genesis 18:1–15**

<sup>1</sup>And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup>He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth <sup>3</sup>and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup>Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet,

and rest yourselves under the tree, <sup>5</sup>while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” <sup>6</sup>And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes.” <sup>7</sup>And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. <sup>8</sup>Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

<sup>9</sup>They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.” <sup>10</sup>The LORD said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. <sup>11</sup>Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. <sup>12</sup>So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?” <sup>13</sup>The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ <sup>14</sup>Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.” <sup>15</sup>But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

*Additional Reading: Genesis 18:16–20:18*

**New Testament Reading: Mark 6:14–34**

The Death of John the Baptist

<sup>14</sup>King Herod heard of it, for Jesus’ name had become known. Some said, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That

is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.”<sup>15</sup> But others said, “He is Elijah.” And others said, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.”<sup>16</sup> But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.”<sup>17</sup> For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, because he had married her.<sup>18</sup> For John had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.”<sup>19</sup> And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not,<sup>20</sup> for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.

<sup>21</sup> But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.<sup>22</sup> For when Herodias’s daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you.”<sup>23</sup> And he vowed to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom.”<sup>24</sup> And she went out and said to her mother, “For what should I ask?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist.”<sup>25</sup> And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”<sup>26</sup> And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her.<sup>27</sup> And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John’s head. He went and beheaded him in the prison<sup>28</sup> and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother.<sup>29</sup> When his disciples heard of it,

they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

#### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

<sup>30</sup> The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.<sup>31</sup> And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.<sup>32</sup> And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.<sup>33</sup> Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.<sup>34</sup> When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.

### Writing

Christian reader, these testimonies of the ancient teachers of the Church have been provided here not to suggest that our Christian faith is founded on the authority of men. The true saving faith is not founded on any Church teacher, old or new, but only and alone on God’s Word, as contained in the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles, an unquestionable witness of divine truth. With his special and uncanny crafts, Satan has caused fanatics to lead men from the Holy Scriptures—which, thank God! even a common layman can now read with benefit—to the writings of the Ancient Church, which are like a broad ocean. A person who has not read the Fathers carefully cannot know precisely whether or not these new teachers are quoting their words correctly and thus they leave a person in grievous doubt. This is why we have been compelled to declare, with this Catalog, and to show everyone that this

new false doctrine has as little foundation in the ancient, pure teachers of the Church as in the Holy Scriptures. It is, in fact, diametrically opposed to it. They quote the Church Fathers in such a way as to give them a false meaning, contrary to the Fathers' will. They do this just as they wantonly pervert the simple, plain, and clear words of Christ's testament and the pure testimonies of the Holy Scriptures. Because of this, the Book of Concord directs everyone to the Holy Scriptures and the simple Catechism. The person who clings to this basic form with true, simple faith provides what is best for his soul and conscience, since it is built on a firm and immovable Rock (Matthew 7; 17; Galatians 1; Psalm 119).

—Catalog of Testimonies, Conclusion  
(Book of Concord)

**Hymnody**

O grant, dear Lord of love,  
That we receive, rejoicing,  
The word proclaimed by John,  
Our true repentance voicing,  
That gladly we may walk  
Upon our Savior's way  
Until we live with Him  
In His eternal day.

—When All the World Was Cursed  
(LSB 346:4)

**Prayer of the Day**

O Lord, You granted Your prophets strength to resist the temptations of the devil and courage to proclaim repentance. Give us pure hearts and minds to follow Your Son faithfully even into suffering and death; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord,

who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B68)

**Lenten Catechesis: The First Article**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

“ . . . [God] has given and constantly preserves [Psalm 36:6] for me my body, soul, and life . . . He gives me food and drink, clothing and support, wife and children, domestic servants, house and home, and more. Besides, He causes all created things to serve for the uses and necessities of life. These include the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens, day and night, air, fire, water, earth, and whatever it bears and produces. They include birds and fish, beasts, grain, and all kinds of produce [Psalm 104]. They also include whatever else there is for bodily and temporal goods, like good government, peace, and security.” . . . None of us owns for himself, nor can preserve, his life nor anything that is here listed or can be listed. This is true no matter how small and unimportant a thing it might be. For all is included in the word Creator.

—Large Catechism II 13–16

All that we have, and whatever else is in heaven and upon the earth, is daily given, preserved, and kept for us by God. Therefore, it is clearly suggested and concluded that it is our duty to love, praise, and thank Him for these things without ceasing. In short, we should serve Him with all these things, as He demands and has taught in the Ten Commandments.

—Large Catechism II 19

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
II 5–8

### TUESDAY—LENT 2

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> When the LORD restored the  
fortunes of | Zion,\*  
we were like | those who dream.
- <sup>2</sup> Then our mouth was filled with | laughter,\*  
and our tongue with | shouts of joy;  
then they said among the nations, “The LORD  
has done great | things for them.”\*  
<sup>3</sup> The LORD has done great things  
for us; | we are glad.
- <sup>4</sup> Restore our fortunes, | O LORD,\*  
like streams in the | Negeb!
- <sup>5</sup> Those who | sow in tears\*  
shall reap with | shouts of joy!
- <sup>6</sup> He who goes out weeping, bearing  
the seed for | sowing,\*  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
bringing his | sheaves with him.  
—Psalm 126

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 127, Psalm 143*

#### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 21:1–21

The Birth of Isaac

<sup>1</sup>The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. <sup>2</sup>And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup>Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. <sup>4</sup>And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he

was eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup>Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. <sup>6</sup>And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.” <sup>7</sup>And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

God Protects Hagar and Ishmael

<sup>8</sup>And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. <sup>9</sup>But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. <sup>10</sup>So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.” <sup>11</sup>And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. <sup>12</sup>But God said to Abraham, “Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named. <sup>13</sup>And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring.” <sup>14</sup>So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

<sup>15</sup>When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. <sup>16</sup>Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, “Let me not look on the death of the child.” And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. <sup>17</sup>And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from

heaven and said to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. <sup>18</sup>Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” <sup>19</sup>Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. <sup>20</sup>And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. <sup>21</sup>He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

**New Testament Reading: Mark 6:35–56**

<sup>35</sup>And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. <sup>36</sup>Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” <sup>37</sup>But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?” <sup>38</sup>And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” <sup>39</sup>Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup>So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. <sup>41</sup>And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. <sup>43</sup>And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. <sup>44</sup>And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on the Water

<sup>45</sup>Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>46</sup>And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>47</sup>And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. <sup>48</sup>And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, <sup>49</sup>but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, <sup>50</sup>for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” <sup>51</sup>And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, <sup>52</sup>for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret

<sup>53</sup>When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. <sup>54</sup>And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him <sup>55</sup>and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup>And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

## Writing

Here it should also be noted that in this way God gives Abraham a palpable demonstration of His grace. He had promised him a son, but He delays the fulfillment of the promise. Meanwhile Abraham, who is satisfied with the Word alone, believes the promise and simply clings to the invisible things. But it happens in due time that the invisible things become visible. We, too, should imitate this and set it before our eyes. We believe that our flesh will rise again on the Last Day. This should be as sure for us as if it had already happened; for we, too, have the Word and the same spiritual comforts that Abraham had.

Therefore just as a hundred years ago we were nothing, so when death will have destroyed our flesh, our flesh will come forth again from nothing and will live. Thus the things we have at the present time instruct us clearly about the things we shall have in the future. Let no one say by way of objection that Abraham had the promises; for do we, too, not have the promises in Baptism and in the Eucharist?

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Ills that still grieve me  
 Soon are to leave me;  
 Though billows tower,  
 And winds gain power,  
 After the storm the fair sun shows its face.  
 Joys e'er increasing  
 And peace never ceasing:  
 These shall I treasure  
 And share in full measure  
 When in His mansions God grants me a place.

—Evening and Morning (*LSB* 726:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, though we do not deserve Your goodness, still You provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may acknowledge Your gifts, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B69)

## Lenten Catechesis: The First Article

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
 Maker of heaven and earth.

We could say much here . . . about how few people believe this article. For we all pass over it, hear it, and say it. Yet we do not see or consider what the words teach us. For if we believed this teaching with the heart, we would also act according to it [James 2:14]. We would not strut about proudly, act defiantly, and boast as though we had life, riches, power, honor, and such, of ourselves [James 4:13–16]. . . .

This [first] article [of the Creed] ought to humble and terrify us all, if we believed it. For we sin daily [Hebrews 3:12–13] with eyes, ears, hands, body and soul, money and possessions, and with everything that we have. This is especially true of those who fight against God's Word. Yet Christians have this advantage: they acknowledge that they are duty bound to serve God for all these things and to be obedient to Him.

We ought, therefore, daily to recite this article. We ought to impress it upon our mind and remember it by all that meets our eyes and by all good that falls to us. Wherever we escape from disaster or danger, we ought to remember that it is God who gives and does

all these things. In these escapes we sense and see His fatherly heart and His surpassing love toward us [Exodus 34:6]. In this way the heart would be warmed and kindled to be thankful, and to use all such good things to honor and praise God.

... This is how much is necessary at first for the most simple to learn about what we have, what we receive from God, and what we owe in return. This is a most excellent knowledge but a far greater treasure. For here we see how the Father has given Himself to us, together with all creatures, and has most richly provided for us in this life. We see that He has overwhelmed us with unspeakable, eternal treasures by His Son and the Holy Spirit, as we shall hear [in the articles of the Creed that follow].

—Large Catechism II 20–24

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
II 9–13

## WEDNESDAY—LENT 2

### Psalmody

- <sup>8</sup> Bless our God, O | peoples;\*  
let the sound of his | praise be heard,  
<sup>9</sup> who has kept our soul among the | living\*  
and has not let our | feet slip.  
<sup>10</sup> For you, O God, have | tested us;\*  
you have tried us as sil- | ver is tried.  
<sup>11</sup> You brought us in- | to the net;\*  
you laid a crushing burden | on our backs;  
<sup>12</sup> you let men ride o- | ver our heads;\*  
we went through fire and through water;  
yet you have brought us out  
to a place of a- | bundance.

- <sup>13</sup> I will come into your house  
with burnt | offerings;\*  
I will perform my | vows to you,  
<sup>14</sup> that which my lips | uttered\*  
and my mouth promised  
when I was in | trouble.  
<sup>15</sup> I will offer to you burnt offerings of  
fattened animals, with the smoke  
of the sacri- | fice of rams;\*  
I will make an offering of | bulls  
and goats.  
—Psalm 66:8–15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 66, Psalm 6*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 22:1–19

The Sacrifice of Isaac

<sup>1</sup>After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.” <sup>2</sup>He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” <sup>3</sup>So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. <sup>4</sup>On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. <sup>5</sup>Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” <sup>6</sup>And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. <sup>7</sup>And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here am I, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt

offering?”<sup>8</sup> Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.

<sup>9</sup>When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.<sup>10</sup> Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.<sup>11</sup> But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.”<sup>12</sup> He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”<sup>13</sup> And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.<sup>14</sup> So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

<sup>15</sup>And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven<sup>16</sup> and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,<sup>17</sup> I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies,<sup>18</sup> and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”<sup>19</sup> So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.

## New Testament Reading: Mark 7:1–23

Traditions and Commandments

<sup>1</sup>Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.<sup>3</sup> (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders,<sup>4</sup> and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.)<sup>5</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”<sup>6</sup> And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

“ This people honors me with their lips,  
but their heart is far from me;  
<sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me,  
teaching as doctrines the  
commandments of men.”

<sup>8</sup>You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

<sup>9</sup>And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!<sup>10</sup> For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’<sup>11</sup> But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban” ’ (that is, given to God)—<sup>12</sup>then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother,<sup>13</sup> thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

What Defiles a Person

<sup>14</sup>And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: <sup>15</sup>There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.” <sup>17</sup>And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. <sup>18</sup>And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, <sup>19</sup>since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) <sup>20</sup>And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. <sup>21</sup>For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>22</sup>coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup>All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Writing

They also quote another passage about perfection, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (Matthew 19:21). This passage has stirred up many who have imagined that casting away possessions and the control of property is perfection. . . . The abandonment of property has no command or advice in the Scriptures. Evangelical poverty does not come from the abandonment of property, but from not being greedy, from not trusting in wealth, just as David was poor in a most wealthy kingdom.

Since the abandonment of property is merely a human tradition, it is a useless service. . . . But <they say> Christ speaks

about perfection here. Indeed, those who quote the text in a butchered way violate it. Perfection is found in what Christ adds, “Follow Me” [Matthew 19:21]. Here He presents an example of obedience to one’s calling. Because not all callings are the same, this calling does not belong to everyone, but only to that person with whom Christ speaks. In the same way we are not to imitate the call of David to the kingdom [1 Samuel 16] or of Abraham to slay his son [Genesis 22]. Callings are personal, just as business matters themselves vary with times and persons. However, the example of obedience is general. Perfection would have belonged to that young man if he had believed and obeyed this vocation. So with us perfection is that everyone with true faith should obey his own calling.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession XXVII (XIII) 45–50

Hymnody

To Thee, omniscient Lord of all,  
In grief and shame I humbly call;  
I see my sins against Thee, Lord,  
The sins of thought and deed and word.  
They press me sore; I cry to Thee:  
O God, be merciful to me!

—To Thee, Omniscient Lord of All  
(LSB 613:1)

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and merciful God, defend Your Church from all false teaching and error that Your faithful people may confess You to be the only true God and rejoice in Your good gifts of life and salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B74)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Second Article

And [I believe] 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.

Here we learn to know the Second Person of the Godhead. . . . We see how He has completely poured forth Himself [Matthew 26:28] and withheld nothing from us [2 Corinthians 8:9].

—Large Catechism II 26

When we had been created by God the Father and had received from Him all kinds of goods, the devil came and led us into disobedience, sin, death, and all evil [Genesis 3]. So we fell under God's wrath and displeasure and were doomed to eternal damnation, just as we had merited and deserved. There was no counsel, help, or comfort until this only and eternal Son of God—in His immeasurable goodness—had compassion upon our misery and wretchedness. He came from heaven to help us [John 1:9]. So those tyrants and jailers are all expelled now. In their place has come Jesus Christ, Lord of life, righteousness, every blessing, and salvation. He has delivered us poor, lost people from hell's jaws, has won us, has made us free [Romans 8:1–2], and has brought us again into the Father's favor and grace. He has taken us as His own property under His shelter and protection [Psalm 61:3–4] so that He may govern us by His righteousness, wisdom, power, life, and blessedness.

—Large Catechism II 28–30

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 14–17

### THURSDAY—LENT 2

#### Psalmody

<sup>6</sup> Blessed | be the LORD!\*  
 For he has heard the voice of  
 my pleas for | mercy.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD is my strength and my shield; in  
 him my heart trusts, and | I am helped;\*  
 my heart exults, and with my song  
 I give | thanks to him.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is the strength of his | people;\*  
 he is the saving refuge of his a- | nointed.

<sup>9</sup> Oh, save your people and bless  
 your | heritage!\*  
 Be their shepherd and carry  
 them for- | ever.

—Psalm 28:6–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 28, Psalm 32*

#### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 24:1–31

Isaac and Rebekah

<sup>1</sup>Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. <sup>2</sup>And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh, <sup>3</sup>that I may make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, <sup>4</sup>but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac." <sup>5</sup>The servant

said to him, “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?”<sup>6</sup> Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there.”<sup>7</sup> The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.<sup>8</sup> But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there.”<sup>9</sup> So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.

<sup>10</sup>Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor.<sup>11</sup> And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water.<sup>12</sup> And he said, “O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham.<sup>13</sup> Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.<sup>14</sup> Let the young woman to whom I shall say, ‘Please let down your jar that I may drink,’ and who shall say, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels’—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master.”

<sup>15</sup>Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, came out with her water

jar on her shoulder.<sup>16</sup> The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up.<sup>17</sup> Then the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.”<sup>18</sup> She said, “Drink, my lord.” And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink.<sup>19</sup> When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.”<sup>20</sup> So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels.<sup>21</sup> The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the LORD had prospered his journey or not.

<sup>22</sup>When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels,<sup>23</sup> and said, “Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?”<sup>24</sup> She said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.”<sup>25</sup> She added, “We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night.”<sup>26</sup> The man bowed his head and worshiped the LORD<sup>27</sup> and said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master’s kinsmen.”<sup>28</sup> Then the young woman ran and told her mother’s household about these things.

<sup>29</sup>Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out toward the man, to the spring.<sup>30</sup> As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, and heard the words of Rebekah his sister, “Thus

the man spoke to me,” he went to the man. And behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. <sup>31</sup>He said, “Come in, O blessed of the LORD. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.”

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 7:24–37**

#### The Syrophenician Woman’s Faith

<sup>24</sup>And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. <sup>25</sup>But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. <sup>26</sup>Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup>And he said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” <sup>28</sup>But she answered him, “Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” <sup>29</sup>And he said to her, “For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.” <sup>30</sup>And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

#### Jesus Heals a Deaf Man

<sup>31</sup>Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup>And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup>And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup>And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” <sup>35</sup>And his

ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup>And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup>And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”

### **Writing**

But when, on the one hand, our unrighteousness was fulfilled, and it was completely obvious that its wages—punishment and death—was to be expected, then, on the other hand, the time came during which God had decided at last to make clear his own benevolence and power (oh, the exceeding favor for humanity and love of God!). He did not hate us nor reject us nor hold a grudge, but he was longsuffering and patient; being merciful, He took up our sins Himself, He Himself gave His own Son as the redemption price for us, the Holy for the unholy, the Incorruptible for the corruptible, the Immortal for the mortal. For what besides His righteousness could cover our sins? In whom is it possible for us lawless and ungodly men to be justified except in the only Son of God? O the sweet exchange! O the incomprehensible handiwork [of God]! O the un-looked-for kindnesses: that, on the one hand, the unlawlessness of the many be hidden in the Righteous One, while, on the other hand, the righteousness of the One justify the many lawless. Thus having proven in the former time the inability of our nature to attain life, now having shown that the Savior has the power to save even powerless things, for both these reasons he willed that we believe in his benevolence and think of him as our nurse, father, teacher, counselor,

physician, mind, light, honor, glory, strength, life, and that we not worry about clothing and food.

—Epistle to Diognetus

### Hymnody

The speechless tongue, the lifeless ear  
You can restore, O Lord;  
Your “Ephphatha,” O Savior dear,  
Can instant help afford.

—O Son of God, in Galilee (*LSB* 841:3)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, let Your merciful ears be open to the prayers of Your humble servants and grant that what they ask may be in accord with Your gracious will; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B76)

### Lenten Catechesis: The Second Article

And [I believe] 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.

Let this, then, be the sum of this article: the little word *Lord* means simply the same as *redeemer*. It means the One who has brought us from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and who preserves us in the same. But all the points that follow in this article serve no other purpose than to explain and express this

redemption. They explain how and by whom it was accomplished. They explain how much it cost Him and what He spent and risked so that He might win us and bring us under His dominion. It explains that He became man [John 1:14], was conceived and born without sin [Hebrews 4:15], from the Holy Spirit and from the virgin Mary [Luke 1:35], so that He might overcome sin. Further, it explains that He suffered, died, and was buried so that He might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owe [1 Corinthians 15:3–4], not with silver or gold, but with His own precious blood [1 Peter 1:18–19]. And He did all this in order to become my Lord. He did none of these things for Himself, nor did He have any need for redemption. After that He rose again from the dead, swallowed up and devoured death [1 Corinthians 15:54], and finally ascended into heaven and assumed the government at the Father’s right hand [1 Peter 3:22]. He did these things so that the devil and all powers must be subject to Him and lie at His feet [Hebrews 10:12–13] until finally, at the Last Day, He will completely divide and separate us from the wicked world, the devil, death, sin, and such [Matthew 24:31–46; 13:24–30, 47–50].

. . . Yes, the entire Gospel that we preach is based on this point, that we properly understand this article as that upon which our salvation and all our happiness rests. It is so rich and complete that we can never learn it fully.

—Large Catechism II 31, 33

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 18–23

## FRIDAY—LENT 2

## Psalmody

<sup>19</sup>Open to me the gates of | righteousness,\*  
that I may enter through them and give  
thanks | to the LORD.

<sup>20</sup>This is the gate | of the LORD;\*  
the righteous shall enter | through it.

<sup>21</sup>I thank you that you have | answered me\*  
and have become my sal- | vation.

<sup>22</sup>The stone that the builders re- | jected\*  
has become the | cornerstone.

<sup>23</sup>This is the LORD's | doing;\*  
it is marvelous | in our eyes.

<sup>24</sup>This is the day that the | LORD has made;\*  
let us rejoice and be | glad in it.

—Psalm 118:19–24

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 118, Psalm 38*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 24:32–52, 61–67

<sup>32</sup>So the man came to the house and unharnessed the camels, and gave straw and fodder to the camels, and there was water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. <sup>33</sup>Then food was set before him to eat. But he said, “I will not eat until I have said what I have to say.” He said, “Speak on.”

<sup>34</sup>So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. <sup>35</sup>The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, camels and donkeys. <sup>36</sup>And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master when she was old, and to him he has given all that he has. <sup>37</sup>My master made me swear, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the

Canaanites, in whose land I dwell, <sup>38</sup>but you shall go to my father’s house and to my clan and take a wife for my son.’ <sup>39</sup>I said to my master, ‘Perhaps the woman will not follow me.’ <sup>40</sup>But he said to me, ‘The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way. You shall take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father’s house. <sup>41</sup>Then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my clan. And if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.’

<sup>42</sup>“I came today to the spring and said, ‘O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you are prospering the way that I go, <sup>43</sup>behold, I am standing by the spring of water. Let the virgin who comes out to draw water, to whom I shall say, ‘Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,’ <sup>44</sup>and who will say to me, ‘Drink, and I will draw for your camels also,’ let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master’s son.’

<sup>45</sup>“Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew water. I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’ <sup>46</sup>She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I will give your camels drink also.’ So I drank, and she gave the camels drink also. <sup>47</sup>Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms. <sup>48</sup>Then I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to take the daughter of my master’s kinsman for his son. <sup>49</sup>Now then, if you are going to show steadfast love and

faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.”

<sup>50</sup>Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, “The thing has come from the LORD; we cannot speak to you bad or good. <sup>51</sup>Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the LORD has spoken.”

<sup>52</sup>When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the LORD. . . .

<sup>61</sup>Then Rebekah and her young women arose and rode on the camels and followed the man. Thus the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

<sup>62</sup>Now Isaac had returned from Beerlahai-roi and was dwelling in the Negeb.

<sup>63</sup>And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming.

<sup>64</sup>And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel <sup>65</sup>and said to the servant, “Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “It is my master.” So she took her veil and covered herself. <sup>66</sup>And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. <sup>67</sup>Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

*Additional Reading: Genesis 25:1–26:35*

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 8:1–21**

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

<sup>1</sup>In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, <sup>2</sup>“I have compassion on the crowd, because

they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. <sup>3</sup>And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away.” <sup>4</sup>And his disciples answered him, “How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?” <sup>5</sup>And he asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven.” <sup>6</sup>And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. <sup>7</sup>And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. <sup>8</sup>And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. <sup>9</sup>And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. <sup>10</sup>And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

The Pharisees Demand a Sign

<sup>11</sup>The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. <sup>12</sup>And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.” <sup>13</sup>And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

The Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod

<sup>14</sup>Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup>And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” <sup>16</sup>And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. <sup>17</sup>And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why are you

discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? <sup>18</sup>Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? <sup>19</sup>When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." <sup>20</sup>"And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." <sup>21</sup>And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

## Writing

Our churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass. The Mass is held among us and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, except that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns. These have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed for this reason alone, that the uneducated be taught what they need to know about Christ. Not only has Paul commanded that a language understood by the people be used in church (1 Corinthians 14:2, 9), but human law has also commanded it. All those able to do so partake of the Sacrament together. This also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship. No one is admitted to the Sacrament without first being examined. The people are also advised about the dignity and use of the Sacrament, about how it brings great consolation to anxious consciences, so that they too may learn to believe God and to expect and ask from Him all that is good. This worship pleases God [Colossians 1:9–10]. Such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion toward God. Therefore, it does not appear that

the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries than among us.

It is clear that for a long time the most public and serious complaint among all good people is that the Mass has been made base and profane by using it to gain filthy wealth [1 Timothy 3:3]. Everyone knows how great this abuse is in all the churches. They know what sort of men say Masses for a fee or an income, and how many celebrate these Masses contrary to canon law. Paul severely threatens those who use the Eucharist in an unworthy manner, "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27). Therefore, when our priests were warned about this sin, private Masses were discontinued among us, since hardly any private Masses were celebrated except for the sake of filthy gain.

—Augsburg Confession XXIV 1–13

## Hymnody

To pastures green, Lord, safely guide,  
To restful waters lead me;  
Your table well for me provide,  
Your wounded hand now feed me.  
Though weary, sinful, sick, and weak,  
Refuge in You alone I seek,  
To share Your cup of healing.

—Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread  
(*LSB* 625:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, Bread of Life, in Your great compassion You fed the multitudes with a few loaves and a few fish. Feed us the holy food of Your Word broken open that hearts may burn and Your very body and blood that eyes may be opened to see You as the very

Bread of heaven; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1004)

### Lenten Catechesis: The Third Article

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.

Through this article the Holy Spirit, with His office, is declared and shown: He makes people holy. . . . There are many kinds of spirits mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, such as the spirit of man [1 Corinthians 2:11], heavenly spirits [Hebrews 12:23], and evil spirits [Luke 7:21]. But God’s Spirit alone is called the Holy Spirit, that is, He who has sanctified and still sanctifies us. . . .

The Holy Spirit causes our sanctification by the following: the communion of saints or the Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. That means He leads us first into His holy congregation and places us in the bosom of the Church. Through the Church He preaches to us and brings us to Christ.

. . . [For] Christ has acquired and gained the treasure for us by His suffering, death, resurrection, and so on [Colossians 2:3]. But if the work remained concealed so that no one knew about it, then it would be useless and lost. So that this treasure might not stay buried, but be received and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed. In the Word He has the Holy Spirit bring this treasure home and make it our own. Therefore, sanctifying is just bringing us to Christ so we receive this good, which we could not get ourselves.

—Large Catechism II 35–39

### Suggested Reading from the the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 24–26

## SATURDAY—LENT 2

### Psalmody

<sup>7</sup>I will tell of | the decree:\*

The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have be- | gotten you.

<sup>8</sup>Ask of me, and I will make the nations your | heritage,\*

and the ends of the earth your pos- | session.

<sup>9</sup>You shall break them with a | rod of iron\* and dash them in pieces like a potter’s | vessel.”

—Psalm 2:7–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 2, Psalm 51*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 27:1–29

Isaac Blesses Jacob

<sup>1</sup>When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, “My son”; and he answered, “Here I am.” <sup>2</sup>He said, “Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death.

<sup>3</sup>Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, <sup>4</sup>and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”

<sup>5</sup>Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, <sup>6</sup>Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “I heard your

father speak to your brother Esau, <sup>7</sup>Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the LORD before I die.’ <sup>8</sup>Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. <sup>9</sup>Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats, so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves. <sup>10</sup>And you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies.” <sup>11</sup>But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. <sup>12</sup>Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing.” <sup>13</sup>His mother said to him, “Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bringing them to me.”

<sup>14</sup>So he went and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved.

<sup>15</sup>Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. <sup>16</sup>And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. <sup>17</sup>And she put the delicious food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

<sup>18</sup>So he went in to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?” <sup>19</sup>Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.” <sup>20</sup>But Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?” He answered, “Because the LORD your God granted me success.” <sup>21</sup>Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not.” <sup>22</sup>So Jacob

went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” <sup>23</sup>And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands. So he blessed him. <sup>24</sup>He said, “Are you really my son Esau?” He answered, “I am.” <sup>25</sup>Then he said, “Bring it near to me, that I may eat of my son’s game and bless you.” So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

<sup>26</sup>Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near and kiss me, my son.” <sup>27</sup>So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said,

“See, the smell of my son  
is as the smell of a field  
that the LORD has blessed!

<sup>28</sup>May God give you of the dew of heaven  
and of the fatness of the earth  
and plenty of grain and wine.

<sup>29</sup>Let peoples serve you,  
and nations bow down to you.

Be lord over your brothers,  
and may your mother’s sons  
bow down to you.

Cursed be everyone who curses you,  
and blessed be everyone  
who blesses you!”

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 8:22–38**

Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida

<sup>22</sup>And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. <sup>23</sup>And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, “Do you see anything?” <sup>24</sup>And he looked up

and said, "I see men, but they look like trees, walking."<sup>25</sup> Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.<sup>26</sup> And he sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

<sup>27</sup>And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"<sup>28</sup> And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."<sup>29</sup> And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ."<sup>30</sup> And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

<sup>31</sup>And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.<sup>32</sup> And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.<sup>33</sup> But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

<sup>34</sup>And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.<sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.<sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?<sup>37</sup> For what can a man give in return for his soul?<sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful

generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

**Writing**

When describing the way of salvation, Scripture indeed mentions other things besides the grace of God in Christ. It declares, for example, that the Gospel and Baptism save (Rom. 1:16: "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation."—1 Pet. 3:21: "Baptism doth also now save us"). So also it declares that faith saves (Luke 7:50: "Thy faith hath saved thee"). But that does not restrict the concept of grace; it simply names the means by which grace, which supplies all human needs, is appropriated. The use of the means of grace does not constitute a meritorious act on man's part, which, at least to some extent, entitles man to God's grace. Nor does faith, by which man appropriates divine grace, represent in any sense a human achievement. On the contrary, Scripture places the means of grace, as the giving means on the part of God, and faith, as the receiving means on the part of man, in opposition to the way of works. To be saved by the Word and the Sacraments means, according to Scripture, to be saved by grace for Christ's sake, without works. And to be saved by faith means to be saved without works, by God's grace alone, for Christ's sake. The way of grace is the way of faith, and the way of faith is the way of grace.

—Francis Pieper

## Hymnody

Yea, Lord, 'twas Thy rich bounty gave  
 My body, soul, and all I have  
 In this poor life of labor.  
 Lord, grant that I in ev'ry place  
 May glorify Thy lavish grace  
 And help and serve my neighbor.  
 Let no false doctrine me beguile;  
 Let Satan not my soul defile.  
 Give strength and patience unto me  
 To bear my cross and follow Thee.  
 Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord,  
     my God and Lord,  
 In death Thy comfort still afford.  
     —Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart  
     (LSB 708:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, Your Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption. Grant us courage to take up our cross daily and follow Him wherever He leads; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A75)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Third Article

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 Spirit has His own congregation in the world, which is the mother that conceives and bears every Christian through God’s Word [Galatians 4:26]. Through the Word He reveals and preaches, He illumines and enkindles hearts, so that they understand, accept, cling to, and persevere in the Word” [1 Corinthians 2:12].

Where the Spirit does not cause the Word to be preached and roused in the heart so that it is understood, it is lost [Matthew 13:19]. . . . For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit who creates, calls, and gathers the Christian Church, without which no one can come to Christ the Lord.

—Large Catechism II 42, 45

In this Christian Church we have forgiveness of sin, which is wrought through the holy Sacraments and Absolution [Matthew 26:28; Mark 1:4; John 20:23] and through all kinds of comforting promises from the entire Gospel. Therefore, whatever ought to be preached about the Sacraments belongs here. In short, the whole Gospel and all the offices of Christianity belong here, which also must be preached and taught without ceasing. God’s grace is secured through Christ [John 1:17], and sanctification is wrought by the Holy Spirit through God’s Word in the unity of the Christian Church. Yet because of our flesh, which we bear about with us, we are never without sin [Romans 7:23–24].

—Large Catechism II 54

The Holy Spirit carries on His work without ceasing to the Last Day. For that purpose He has appointed a congregation upon earth by which He speaks and does everything. For He has not yet brought together all His Christian Church [*Christenheit*] [John 10:16] or granted all forgiveness. Therefore, we believe in Him who daily brings us into the fellowship of this Christian Church through the Word. Through the same Word and the forgiveness of sins He bestows, increases, and strengthens faith. So when He has done it all, and we abide in this and die to the world and to all evil, He may finally make

us perfectly and forever holy. Even now we expect this in faith through the Word.

—Large Catechism II 61–62

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
II 27–38

## THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>“Greatly have they afflicted me | from  
my youth”—\*

let Israel | now say—

<sup>2</sup>“Greatly have they afflicted me | from  
my youth,\*

yet they have not prevailed a- | gainst me.

<sup>3</sup>The plowers plowed up- | on my back;\*  
they made long their | furrows.”

<sup>4</sup>The LORD is | righteous;\*  
he has cut the cords of the | wicked.

<sup>5</sup>May all who hate | Zion\*  
be put to shame and turned | backward!

<sup>6</sup>Let them be like the grass on  
the | housetops,\*  
which withers before it | grows up,

<sup>7</sup>with which the reaper  
does not | fill his hand\*  
nor the binder of | sheaves his arms,

<sup>8</sup>nor do those who pass by say, “The blessing  
of the LORD be up- | on you!\*

We bless you in the name | of the LORD!”  
—Psalm 129

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 79, Psalm 102*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 27:30–45; 28:10–22

[Isaac Blesses Jacob]

<sup>30</sup>As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. <sup>31</sup>He also prepared delicious food and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his son’s game, that you may bless me.” <sup>32</sup>His father Isaac said to him, “Who are you?” He answered, “I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.” <sup>33</sup>Then Isaac trembled very violently and said, “Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed.” <sup>34</sup>As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!” <sup>35</sup>But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing.” <sup>36</sup>Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.” Then he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” <sup>37</sup>Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?” <sup>38</sup>Esau said to his father, “Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

<sup>39</sup>Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

“Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be,

and away from the dew  
of heaven on high.

<sup>40</sup>By your sword you shall live,  
and you shall serve your brother;  
but when you grow restless  
you shall break his yoke  
from your neck.”

<sup>41</sup>Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.” <sup>42</sup>But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, “Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. <sup>43</sup>Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran <sup>44</sup>and stay with him a while, until your brother’s fury turns away—  
<sup>45</sup>until your brother’s anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?” . . .

Jacob’s Dream

<sup>28:10</sup>Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. <sup>11</sup>And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. <sup>12</sup>And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! <sup>13</sup>And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, “I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. <sup>14</sup>Your offspring shall

be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. <sup>15</sup>Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” <sup>16</sup>Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” <sup>17</sup>And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

<sup>18</sup>So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. <sup>19</sup>He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. <sup>20</sup>Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, <sup>21</sup>so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, <sup>22</sup>and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.”

### New Testament Reading: Mark 9:1–13

<sup>1</sup>And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

The Transfiguration

<sup>2</sup>And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, <sup>3</sup>and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup>And there

appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup>And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” <sup>6</sup>For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. <sup>7</sup>And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” <sup>8</sup>And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

<sup>9</sup>And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup>So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. <sup>11</sup>And they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” <sup>12</sup>And he said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? <sup>13</sup>But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”

## Writing

In a word, enthusiasm\* dwells in Adam and his children from the beginning to the end of the world. Its venom has been implanted and infused into them by the old serpent. It is the origin, power, and strength of all heresy, especially of that of the papacy and Muhammad. Therefore, we must constantly maintain this point: God does not want to deal with us in any other way than through the spoken Word and the Sacraments. Whatever is praised as from the Spirit—without the Word and Sacraments—is the devil himself. God wanted to appear

even to Moses through the burning bush and spoken Word [Exodus 3:2–15]. No prophet, neither Elijah nor Elisha, received the Spirit without the Ten Commandments or the spoken Word. John the Baptist was not conceived without the word of Gabriel coming first, nor did he leap in his mother’s womb without Mary’s voice [Luke 1:11–20, 41]. Peter says, “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” [2 Peter 1:21]. Without the outward Word, however, they were not holy. Much less would the Holy Spirit have moved them to speak when they were still unholy. They were holy, says he, since the Holy Spirit spoke through them.

—Smalcald Articles III X 9–13

*\*Enthusiasm is here used for the spirit of the fanatics who believed that God spoke to them without the Holy Scriptures.*

## Hymnody

O wondrous type! O vision fair  
Of glory that the Church may share,  
Which Christ upon the mountain shows,  
Where brighter than the sun He glows!

—O Wondrous Type! O Vision Fair  
(LSB 413:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L25)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Lord's Prayer

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.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 39–47

## MONDAY—LENT 3

### Psalmody

<sup>13</sup> But I am like a deaf man; I | do not hear,\*  
like a mute man who does not o- | pen  
his mouth.

<sup>14</sup> I have become like a man who | does not  
hear,\*  
and in whose mouth are | no rebukes.

<sup>15</sup> But for you, O LORD, | do I wait;\*  
it is you, O Lord my God,  
who will | answer.

<sup>21</sup> Do not forsake me, | O LORD!\*  
O my God, be not | far from me!

<sup>22</sup> Make haste to | help me,\*  
O Lord, my sal- | vation!  
—Psalm 38:13–15, 21–22

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 54, Psalm 130*

## Old Testament Reading: Genesis 29:1–30

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

<sup>1</sup>Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. <sup>2</sup>As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, <sup>3</sup>and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well.

<sup>4</sup>Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran." <sup>5</sup>He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They said, "We know him." <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!" <sup>7</sup>He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them." <sup>8</sup>But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

<sup>9</sup>While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. <sup>10</sup>Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

<sup>11</sup>Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud.

<sup>12</sup>And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.

<sup>13</sup>As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him and

embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things,<sup>14</sup> and Laban said to him, “Surely you are my bone and my flesh!” And he stayed with him a month.

<sup>15</sup>Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?”<sup>16</sup> Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.<sup>17</sup> Leah’s eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance.<sup>18</sup> Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, “I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.”<sup>19</sup> Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.”<sup>20</sup> So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

<sup>21</sup>Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.”<sup>22</sup> So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast.<sup>23</sup> But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her.<sup>24</sup> (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.)<sup>25</sup> And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?”<sup>26</sup> Laban said, “It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.<sup>27</sup> Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.”<sup>28</sup> Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.<sup>29</sup> (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.)<sup>30</sup> So

Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.

*Additional Reading: Genesis 29:11–34:31*

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 9:14–32**

Jesus Heals a Boy with an Unclean Spirit

<sup>14</sup>And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them.<sup>15</sup> And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him.<sup>16</sup> And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?”<sup>17</sup> And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute.<sup>18</sup> And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.”<sup>19</sup> And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.”<sup>20</sup> And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.<sup>21</sup> And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood.<sup>22</sup> And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”<sup>23</sup> And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.”<sup>24</sup> Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”<sup>25</sup> And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come

out of him and never enter him again.”<sup>26</sup> And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.”<sup>27</sup> But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.<sup>28</sup> And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?”<sup>29</sup> And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

Jesus Again Foretells Death, Resurrection

<sup>30</sup>They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know,<sup>31</sup> for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”<sup>32</sup> But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

## Writing

You cast your sins from yourself and onto Christ when you firmly believe that his wounds and sufferings are your sins, to be borne and paid for by him, as we read in Isaiah 53 [:6], “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” St. Peter says, “in his body has he borne our sins on the wood of the cross” [I Pet. 2:24]. St. Paul says, “God has made him a sinner for us, so that through him we would be made just” [II Cor. 5:21]. You must stake everything on these and similar verses. The more your conscience torments you, the more tenaciously must you cling to them. If you do not do that, but presume to still your conscience with your contrition and penance, you will never obtain peace of mind, but will have to despair in the end. If we allow sin to remain

in our conscience and try to deal with it there, or if we look at sin in our heart, it will be much too strong for us and will live on forever. But if we behold it resting on Christ and [see it] overcome by his resurrection, and then boldly believe this, even it is dead and nullified. Sin cannot remain on Christ, since it is swallowed up by his resurrection.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Help then, O Lord, our unbelief;  
And may our faith abound  
To call on You when You are near  
And seek where You are found.

—We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight  
(*LSB* 720:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, our support and defense in every need, continue to preserve Your Church in safety, govern her by Your goodness, and bless her with Your peace; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B77)

## Lenten Catechesis:

### The Introduction and First Petition

Our Father, who art in heaven.

No person can perfectly keep the Ten Commandments, even though he has begun to believe. The devil with all his power, together with the world and our own flesh, resists our efforts. Therefore, nothing is more necessary than that we should continually turn towards God’s ear, call upon Him, and pray to Him. We must pray that He would give, preserve, and increase faith in us and the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments

[2 Thessalonians 1:3]. We pray that He would remove everything that is in our way and that opposes us in these matters. So that we might know what and how to pray, our Lord Jesus Christ has Himself taught us both the way and the words [Luke 11:1–4], as we shall see.

—Large Catechism III 2–3

Hallowed be Thy name.

[God’s] name should have its proper honor; it should be valued holy and grand as the greatest treasure and holy thing . . . that we have. As godly children we should pray that God’s name, which is already holy in heaven, may also be and remain holy with us upon earth and in all the world.

—Large Catechism III 38

In this petition we pray for exactly what God demands in the Second Commandment. We pray that His name not be taken in vain to swear, curse, lie, deceive, and so on, but be used well for God’s praise and honor. For whoever uses God’s name for any sort of wrong profanes and desecrates this holy name. . . . This point is easy and clear if only the language is understood: to hallow means the same as to praise, magnify, and honor both in word and deed.

—Large Catechism III 45–46

We should pray for ourselves who have God’s Word but are not thankful for it, nor live like we ought according to the Word. If you pray for this with your heart, you can be sure that it pleases God. For He will not hear anything more dear to Him than that His honor and praise is exalted above everything else and that His Word is taught in its purity and is considered precious and dear.

—Large Catechism III 47–48

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 48–54

## TUESDAY—LENT 3

### Psalmody

- <sup>5</sup> Remember the wondrous works that | he has done,\*  
his miracles, and the judgments he | uttered,
- <sup>6</sup> O offspring of Abraham, his | servant,\*  
children of Jacob, his | chosen ones!
- <sup>7</sup> He is the | LORD our God,\*  
his judgments are in | all the earth.
- <sup>8</sup> He remembers his covenant for- | ever,\*  
the word that he commanded, for a  
thousand gener- | ations,
- <sup>9</sup> the covenant that he made with | Abraham,\*  
his sworn promise to | Isaac,
- <sup>10</sup> which he confirmed to Jacob as a | statute,\*  
to Israel as an everlasting  
covenant, | <sup>11</sup> saying,
- “To you I will give the land of | Canaan\*  
as your portion for an in- | heritance.”
- Psalm 105:5–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 105, 143*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 35:1–29

God Blesses and Renames Jacob

<sup>1</sup>God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.” <sup>2</sup>So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change

your garments. <sup>3</sup>Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.” <sup>4</sup>So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

<sup>5</sup>And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. <sup>6</sup>And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him, <sup>7</sup>and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother. <sup>8</sup>And Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried under an oak below Bethel. So he called its name Allon-bacuth.

<sup>9</sup>God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. <sup>10</sup>And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.” So he called his name Israel. <sup>11</sup>And God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. <sup>12</sup>The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.” <sup>13</sup>Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him. <sup>14</sup>And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. <sup>15</sup>So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.

The Deaths of Rachel and Isaac

<sup>16</sup>Then they journeyed from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor, and she had hard labor. <sup>17</sup>And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, “Do not fear, for you have another son.” <sup>18</sup>And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. <sup>19</sup>So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), <sup>20</sup>and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb. It is the pillar of Rachel’s tomb, which is there to this day. <sup>21</sup>Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

<sup>22</sup>While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine. And Israel heard of it.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. <sup>23</sup>The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob’s firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. <sup>24</sup>The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. <sup>25</sup>The sons of Bilhah, Rachel’s servant: Dan and Naphtali. <sup>26</sup>The sons of Zilpah, Leah’s servant: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

<sup>27</sup>And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. <sup>28</sup>Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. <sup>29</sup>And Isaac breathed his last, and he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 9:35–50

Who Is the Greatest?

<sup>35</sup>And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of

all.”<sup>36</sup> And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them,<sup>37</sup> “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”

Anyone Not Against Us Is for Us

<sup>38</sup>John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.”<sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.”<sup>40</sup> For the one who is not against us is for us.<sup>41</sup> For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

Temptations to Sin

<sup>42</sup>“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.”<sup>43</sup> And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.<sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell.<sup>47</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell,<sup>48</sup> “where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”<sup>49</sup> For everyone will be salted with fire.<sup>50</sup> Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

## Writing

Why [should we see the blood of Christ in Baptism]?

Because this holy baptism was purchased for us through this same blood, which he shed for us and with which he paid for sin. This blood and its merit and power he put into baptism, in order that in baptism we might receive it. For whenever a person receives baptism in faith this is the same as if he were visibly washed and cleansed of sin with the blood of Christ. For we do not attain the forgiveness of sins through our work, but rather through the death and the shedding of the blood of the Son of God. But he takes this forgiveness of sin and tucks it into baptism.

This is what St. John was looking to when he mingled water and blood together, for, after all, it has in it that which was gained through the blood. And thus St. John deems the person who is baptized as having been washed in the blood of Christ. His blood is not that of a sinful man or the blood of a dead goat or ox; it is innocent, just, and holy, it is a blood of life. Therefore it also contains such strong salt and soap that, wherever it touches sin and uncleanness, it bites and washes it all away, eats and destroys both sin and death in an instant.

Thus St. John pictures our dear baptism for us in this way, so that we shall not regard and look only at the clear water, for, he says, Christ comes “not with water only” (as the Anabaptists blaspheme, saying it is nothing but water) “but with the water and the blood” [I John 5:6]. Through such words he desires to admonish us to see with spiritual eyes and see in baptism the beautiful, rosy-red blood of Christ, which flowed and poured from his holy side. And therefore he calls those who have been baptized none other than those

who have been bathed and cleansed in this same rosy-red blood of Christ.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Lord Jesus Christ, the children's friend,  
To each of them Your presence send;  
Call them by name and keep them true  
In loving faith, dear Lord, to You.

—Lord, Jesus Christ, the Children's  
Friend (*LSB* 866:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Everlasting Father, source of every blessing, mercifully direct and govern us by Your Holy Spirit that we may complete the works You have prepared for us to do; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B79)

### Lenten Catechesis: The Second Petition

Thy kingdom come.

God's Kingdom . . . [is] "nothing other than we learned in the Creed: God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, into the world to redeem and deliver us from the devil's power [1 John 3:8]. He sent Him to bring us to Himself and to govern us as a King of righteousness, life, and salvation against sin, death, and an evil conscience. For this reason He has also given His Holy Spirit, who is to bring these things home to us by His holy Word and to illumine and strengthen us in the faith by His power."

We pray here in the first place that this may happen with us. We pray that His name may be so praised through God's holy Word and a Christian life that we who have

accepted it may abide and daily grow in it, and that it may gain approval and acceptance among other people. We pray that it may go forth with power throughout the world [2 Thessalonians 3:1]. We pray that many may find entrance into the kingdom of grace [John 3:5], be made partakers of redemption [Colossians 1:12–14], and be led to it by the Holy Spirit [Romans 8:14], so that we may all together remain forever in the one kingdom now begun.

—Large Catechism III 51–52

[In this petition,] we pray for an eternal inestimable treasure and everything God Himself possesses. This is far too great for any human heart to think about desiring, if God had not Himself commanded us to pray for the same. But because He is God, He also claims the honor of giving much more and more abundantly than anyone can understand [Ephesians 3:20]. He is like an eternal, unfailing fountain. The more it pours forth and overflows, the more it continues to give. God desires nothing more seriously from us than that we ask Him for much and great things.

—Large Catechism III 55–56

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
II 55–60

## WEDNESDAY—LENT 3

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be | put to shame;\*  
in your righteousness de- | liver me!

<sup>2</sup>Incline your ear to me;  
rescue me | speedily!\*

Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong  
fortress to | save me!

<sup>3</sup>For you are my rock and my | fortress;\*  
and for your name's sake you lead me  
and | guide me;

<sup>4</sup>you take me out of the net they  
have hidden | for me,\*  
for you are my | refuge.

<sup>5</sup>Into your hand I commit my | spirit;\*  
you have redeemed me,  
O LORD, | faithful God.  
—Psalm 31:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 31, Psalm 6*

## Old Testament Reading: Genesis 37:1–36

## Joseph's Dreams

<sup>1</sup>Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

<sup>2</sup>These are the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. <sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. <sup>4</sup>But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

<sup>5</sup>Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even

more. <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup>Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." <sup>8</sup>His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

<sup>9</sup>Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." <sup>10</sup>But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?"

<sup>11</sup>And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

## Joseph Sold by His Brothers

<sup>12</sup>Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. <sup>13</sup>And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am."

<sup>14</sup>So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word." So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

<sup>15</sup>And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" <sup>16</sup>"I am seeking my brothers," he said. "Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." <sup>17</sup>And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

<sup>18</sup>They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. <sup>19</sup>They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. <sup>20</sup>Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.” <sup>21</sup>But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” <sup>22</sup>And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. <sup>23</sup>So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. <sup>24</sup>And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

<sup>25</sup>Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup>Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup>Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him. <sup>28</sup>Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

<sup>29</sup>When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes <sup>30</sup>and returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?” <sup>31</sup>Then they took Joseph’s robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. <sup>32</sup>And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, “This

we have found; please identify whether it is your son’s robe or not.” <sup>33</sup>And he identified it and said, “It is my son’s robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.” <sup>34</sup>Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. <sup>35</sup>All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus his father wept for him. <sup>36</sup>Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 10:1–12

#### Teaching About Divorce

<sup>1</sup>And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.

<sup>2</sup>And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” <sup>3</sup>He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” <sup>4</sup>They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.” <sup>5</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. <sup>6</sup>But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ <sup>7</sup>‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, <sup>8</sup>and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. <sup>9</sup>What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

<sup>10</sup>And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. <sup>11</sup>And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, <sup>12</sup>and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

## Writing

In common trade, one carefully slips something out of another's hand, so that the latter must watch out. Or one person surprises and cheats another in a matter where he sees advantage and benefit for himself. . . . Yet this property must not be considered as taken by fraud or stolen, but honestly bought. Here they say, "First come, first served," and "Everyone must look to his own interest, let another get what he can." . . .

The same was done in former times also with respect to wives. They knew such tricks, that if one were pleased with another woman, he personally or through others (as there were many ways and means to be invented) caused her husband to become displeased with her. Or he had her resist her husband and act in such a way that he was obliged to dismiss her and let her go to the other man. That sort of thing undoubtedly prevailed much under the Law, as we also read in the Gospel about King Herod. He took his brother's wife while he was still living. Yet Herod wanted to be thought of as an honorable, pious man, as St. Mark also testifies about him [Mark 6:17–20]. But such an example, I trust, will not happen among us. For in the New Testament those who are married are forbidden to get divorced [Mark 10:9]. . . .

In whatever way such things happen, we must know that God does not want you to deprive your neighbor of anything that belongs to him, so that he suffer the loss and you gratify your greed with it. This is true even if you could keep it honorably before the world. For it is a secret and sly trick done "under the hat," as we say, so it may not be noticed. Although you go your way as if you

had done no one any wrong, you have still injured your neighbor.

—Large Catechism I 303, 305–307

## Hymnody

Oh, blest that house where faith is found  
And all in hope and love abound;  
They trust their God and serve Him still  
And do in all His holy will!

—Oh, Blest the House (*LSB* 862:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful Father, Your patience and loving-kindness toward us have no end. Grant that by Your Holy Spirit we may always think and do those things that are pleasing in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B80)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

In God's kingdom, although we have prayed for the greatest need—for the Gospel, faith, and the Holy Spirit, that He may govern us and redeem us from the devil's power—we must also pray that God's will be done. For there will be strange events if we are to abide in God's will. We shall have to suffer many thrusts and blows on that account from everything that seeks to oppose and prevent the fulfillment of the first two petitions.

—Large Catechism III 61

If we would be Christians, therefore, we must surely expect and count on having the devil with all his angels and the world as our

enemies [Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:9]. They will bring every possible misfortune and grief upon us. For where God's Word is preached, accepted, or believed and produces fruit, there the holy cross cannot be missing [Acts 14:22]. And let no one think that he shall have peace [Matthew 10:34]. He must risk whatever he has upon earth—possessions, honor, house and estate, wife and children, body and life. Now, this hurts our flesh and the old Adam [Ephesians 4:22]. The test is to be steadfast and to suffer with patience [James 5:7–8] in whatever way we are assaulted, and to let go whatever is taken from us [1 Peter 2:20–21].

—Large Catechism III 65–67

We have this comfort and confidence: the devil's will and purpose and all our enemies shall and must fail and come to nothing, no matter how proud, secure, and powerful they know themselves to be. For if their will were not broken and hindered, God's kingdom could not remain on earth nor His name be hallowed.

—Large Catechism III 70

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
II 61–66

## THURSDAY—LENT 3

### Psalmody

- <sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, he looked  
upon | their distress,\*  
when he | heard their cry.
- <sup>45</sup> For their sake he remembered  
his | covenant,\*  
and relented according to the abundance  
of his | steadfast love.
- <sup>46</sup> He caused them to be | pitied\*  
by all those who held them | captive.
- <sup>47</sup> Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us  
from among the | nations,\*  
that we may give thanks to your holy  
name and glory | in your praise.
- <sup>48</sup> Blessèd be the LORD, the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to ever- | lasting!\*  
And let all the people say,  
“Amen!” | Praise the LORD!  
—Psalm 106:44–48

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 106, Psalm 32*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 39:1–23

Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

<sup>1</sup>Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. <sup>2</sup>The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. <sup>3</sup>His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. <sup>4</sup>So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. <sup>5</sup>From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had the LORD

blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field. <sup>6</sup>So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. <sup>7</sup>And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." <sup>8</sup>But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. <sup>9</sup>He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" <sup>10</sup>And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.

<sup>11</sup>But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, <sup>12</sup>she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. <sup>13</sup>And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, <sup>14</sup>she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. <sup>15</sup>And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house." <sup>16</sup>Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, <sup>17</sup>and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to laugh at me. <sup>18</sup>But as soon as I lifted

up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house."

<sup>19</sup>As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. <sup>20</sup>And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. <sup>21</sup>But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. <sup>22</sup>And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. <sup>23</sup>The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the LORD was with him. And whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed.

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 10:13–31**

Let the Children Come to Me

<sup>13</sup>And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup>But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. <sup>15</sup>Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." <sup>16</sup>And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

The Rich Young Man

<sup>17</sup>And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>18</sup>And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. <sup>19</sup>You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do

not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’”<sup>20</sup> And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”<sup>21</sup> And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”<sup>22</sup> Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

<sup>23</sup>And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”<sup>24</sup> And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!<sup>25</sup> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”<sup>26</sup> And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?”<sup>27</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”<sup>28</sup> Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.”<sup>29</sup> Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel,<sup>30</sup> who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.<sup>31</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

## Writing

[Commenting on the Old Testament reading:] V. 20. *And Joseph’s master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king’s prisoners were bound; and he was there in the prison.* The innocent young man was confined in the state prison, where the prisoners of the king, the criminals against the state, were kept. Thus many an innocent Christian has been obliged to suffer wrongfully, to be suspected and accused of crimes of various kinds. In spite of all that, however, the believers place their trust in the mercy of God. V. 21. *But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.* The hearts of men are in the hands of the Lord, and He can guide them like rivers of water. It was the mercy of the Lord which secured for Joseph the favor of the jailer, himself an officer under Potiphar. V. 22. *And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph’s hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.* Although Joseph himself was a prisoner, the jailer’s trust in him was so great that he gave him charge of all the prisoners and of all the work which the prisoners had to perform. V. 23. *The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand, with regard to all things which were expected of him he placed implicit confidence in Joseph; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.* With a clear conscience and the Lord’s favor on their side, the believers are able to endure not only false accusations, but even worse tribulations, the loss of liberty and of life.

—Paul E. Kretzmann

## Hymnody

Thy righteousness, O Christ,  
Alone can cover me;  
No righteousness avails  
Save that which is of Thee.  
To whom save Thee,  
Who canst alone  
For sin atone,  
Lord, shall I flee?

—Thy Works, Not Mine, O Christ  
(LSB 565:5)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, whose grace always precedes and follows us, help us to forsake all trust in earthly gain and to find in You our heavenly treasure; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B81)

## Lenten Catechesis:

### The Fourth and Fifth Petitions

Give us this day our daily bread.

With many words one could list all the things that are included, like when we ask God to give us food and drink, clothing, house and home, and health of body. Or when we ask that He cause the grain and fruit of the field to grow and mature well. Furthermore, we ask that He help us at home with good housekeeping and that He give and preserve for us a godly wife, children, and servants. We ask that He cause our work, trade, or whatever we are engaged in to prosper and succeed, favor us with faithful neighbors and good friends, and other such things. Likewise, we ask that He give wisdom, strength, and success to emperors, kings, and all estates, and especially to the

rulers of our country and to all counselors, magistrates, and officers. . . . We ask that He give to subjects and the common people obedience, peace, and harmony in their life with one another. . . . We ask that He would preserve us from all sorts of disaster to body and livelihood, like lightning, hail, fire, flood, poison, plague, cattle disease, war and bloodshed, famine, destructive beasts, wicked men, and so forth. It is well to impress all this upon the common people: these things come from God and must be prayed for by us.

—Large Catechism III 76–79

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

It is not as though [God] did not forgive sin without and even before our prayer. (He has given us the Gospel, in which is pure forgiveness before we prayed or ever thought about it [Romans 5:8].) But the purpose of this prayer is that we may recognize and receive such forgiveness. . . . We sin daily in word and deed [Genesis 6:5], by what we do and fail to do [James 2:15–16]. By this the conscience is thrown into unrest, so that it is afraid of God’s wrath and displeasure. So it loses the comfort and confidence derived from the Gospel. Therefore, it is always necessary that we run here and receive consolation to comfort the conscience again.

—Large Catechism III 88–89

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 67–73

## FRIDAY—LENT 3

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Hear this, all | peoples!\*
- Give ear, all inhabitants | of the world,
- <sup>2</sup> both | low and high,\*
- rich and poor to- | gether!
- <sup>3</sup> My mouth shall speak | wisdom,\*
- the meditation of my heart shall be
- under- | standing.
- <sup>7</sup> Truly no man can ransom an- | other,\*
- or give to God the price | of his life,
- <sup>8</sup> for the ransom of their life is | costly\*  
and can nev- | er suffice,
- <sup>9</sup> that he should live on for- | ever\*  
and never | see the pit.
- <sup>10</sup> For he sees that even the | wise die;\*
- the fool and the stupid alike must perish  
and leave their wealth to | others.
- Psalm 49: 1–3, 7–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 49, Psalm 102*

## Old Testament Reading: Genesis 40:1–23

Joseph Interprets Two Prisoners' Dreams

<sup>1</sup>Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, <sup>3</sup>and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. <sup>4</sup>The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody.

<sup>5</sup>And one night they both dreamed—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its

own interpretation. <sup>6</sup>When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. <sup>7</sup>So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?" <sup>8</sup>They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me."

<sup>9</sup>So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me, <sup>10</sup>and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. <sup>11</sup>Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." <sup>12</sup>Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. <sup>13</sup>In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer. <sup>14</sup>Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. <sup>15</sup>For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit."

<sup>16</sup>When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on my head, <sup>17</sup>and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head." <sup>18</sup>And Joseph answered and said, "This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days. <sup>19</sup>In three days Pharaoh will lift up your

head—from you!—and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you.”

<sup>20</sup>On the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. <sup>21</sup>He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. <sup>22</sup>But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. <sup>23</sup>Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 10:32–52**

Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time

<sup>32</sup>And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, <sup>33</sup>saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. <sup>34</sup>And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.”

The Request of James and John

<sup>35</sup>And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” <sup>36</sup>And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” <sup>37</sup>And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” <sup>38</sup>Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” <sup>39</sup>And

they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, <sup>40</sup>but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” <sup>41</sup>And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. <sup>42</sup>And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup>But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup>and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus

<sup>46</sup>And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. <sup>47</sup>And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>48</sup>And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>49</sup>And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” <sup>50</sup>And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup>And Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.” <sup>52</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

## Writing

I. Luke 22:24–27. Christ clearly bans lordship among the apostles. This was the very question: When Christ spoke of His passion, the apostles were disputing over who should be the head of the others, and, as it were, the vicar of the absent Christ. Christ rebukes this error of the apostles and teaches that there shall not be lordship or superiority among them. Instead, the apostles would be sent forth as equals to the common ministry of the Gospel. So, He says, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves” (22:25–26). The contrast here shows that lordship [among the apostles] is not approved.

II. Matthew 18:2. When Christ, in the same dispute about the Kingdom, places a little child in their midst, He is teaching the same thing by parable. Just as a child neither takes nor seeks sovereignty for himself, so this shows that there is not to be sovereignty among ministers.

III. John 20:21. Christ sends forth His disciples in equality, without any distinction . . . He says, “As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.” He says that He sends them individually in the same way He Himself was sent [John 12:44–50]. Therefore, He grants no one a privilege or lordship above the rest.

—Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope 8–9

## Hymnody

O Christ, our true and only light,  
Enlighten those who sit in night;  
Let those afar now hear Your voice  
And in Your fold with us rejoice.

—O Christ, Our True and Only Light  
(*LSB* 839:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, the helper of all who call on You, have mercy on us and give us eyes of faith to see Your Son that we may follow Him on the way that leads to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B83)

## Lenten Catechesis:

### The Fifth and Sixth Petitions

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

There is here attached a necessary, yet comforting addition: “As we forgive.” . . . Just as we daily sin much against God, and yet He forgives everything through grace, so we, too, must ever forgive our neighbor who does us injury, violence, and wrong . . . . If, therefore, you do not forgive, then do not think that God forgives you [Matthew 18:23–25]. But if you forgive, you have this comfort and assurance, that you are forgiven in heaven. This is not because of your forgiving. For God forgives freely and without condition, out of pure grace, because He has so promised, as the Gos-pel teaches. But God says this in order that He may establish forgiveness as our con-firmation and assurance, as a sign alongside of the promise, which agrees with this prayer in

Luke 6:37, “Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”

—Large Catechism III 93–96

And lead us not into temptation.

Temptation . . . is of three kinds: of the flesh, of the world, and of the devil. For we dwell in the flesh and carry the old Adam about our neck . . . . The old Adam encourages us to have all kinds of evil lusts, which cling to us by nature and to which we are moved by the society, the example, and what we hear and see of other people. . . . [The world] offends us in word and deed. It drives us to anger and impatience. . . . No one is willing to be the least. Everyone desires to sit at the head of the group and to be seen before all . . . . [The devil] especially agitates matters that concern the conscience and spiritual affairs. He leads us to despise and disregard both God’s Word and works.

—Large Catechism III 101–104

“Lead us not into temptation” . . . refers to times when God gives us power and strength to resist the temptation [1 Corinthians 10:13]. However, the temptation is not taken away or removed. While we live in the flesh and have the devil around us, no one can escape his temptation and lures. It can only mean that we must endure trials—indeed, be engulfed in them [2 Timothy 2:3]. But we say this prayer so that we may not fall and be drowned in them.

—Large Catechism III 106

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 74–83

**SATURDAY—LENT 3**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> In the LORD I take refuge; how can you say | to my soul,\*  
“Flee like a bird to your | mountain,
- <sup>2</sup> for behold, the wicked | bend the bow;\*  
they have fitted their arrow to the string to shoot in the dark  
at the up- | right in heart;
- <sup>3</sup> if the foundations | are destroyed,\*  
what can the | righteous do?”
- <sup>4</sup> The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD’s throne is in | heaven;\*  
his eyes see, his eyelids test,  
the chil- | dren of man.
- <sup>5</sup> The LORD tests the | righteous,\*  
but his soul hates the wicked  
and the one who loves | violence.
- <sup>6</sup> Let him rain coals on the | wicked;\*  
fire and sulfur and a scorching wind  
shall be the portion | of their cup.
- <sup>7</sup> For the LORD is righteous;  
he loves | righteous deeds;\*  
the upright shall be- | hold his face.  
—Psalm 11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 118, Psalm 51*

**Old Testament Reading: Genesis 41:1–27**

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh’s Dreams

<sup>1</sup>After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, <sup>2</sup>and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows attractive and plump, and they fed in the reed grass. <sup>3</sup>And behold, seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. <sup>4</sup>And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven attractive, plump cows. And Pharaoh awoke. <sup>5</sup>And he fell asleep and

dreamed a second time. And behold, seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. <sup>6</sup>And behold, after them sprouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind. <sup>7</sup>And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump, full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. <sup>8</sup>So in the morning his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

<sup>9</sup>Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “I remember my offenses today. <sup>10</sup>When Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, <sup>11</sup>we dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own interpretation. <sup>12</sup>A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream. <sup>13</sup>And as he interpreted to us, so it came about. I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged.”

<sup>14</sup>Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit. And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. <sup>15</sup>And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” <sup>16</sup>Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.” <sup>17</sup>Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile. <sup>18</sup>Seven cows, plump and attractive, came up out of the Nile

and fed in the reed grass. <sup>19</sup>Seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and thin, such as I had never seen in all the land of Egypt. <sup>20</sup>And the thin, ugly cows ate up the first seven plump cows, <sup>21</sup>but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as ugly as at the beginning. Then I awoke. <sup>22</sup>I also saw in my dream seven ears growing on one stalk, full and good. <sup>23</sup>Seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them, <sup>24</sup>and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me.”

<sup>25</sup>Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>26</sup>The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. <sup>27</sup>The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine.”

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 11:1–19**

#### The Triumphal Entry

<sup>1</sup>Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples <sup>2</sup>and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’” <sup>4</sup>And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. <sup>5</sup>And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” <sup>6</sup>And they

told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. <sup>7</sup>And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. <sup>8</sup>And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. <sup>9</sup>And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! <sup>10</sup>Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

<sup>11</sup>And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

<sup>12</sup>On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. <sup>13</sup>And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. <sup>14</sup>And he said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

<sup>15</sup>And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. <sup>16</sup>And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. <sup>17</sup>And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.” <sup>18</sup>And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.

<sup>19</sup>And when evening came they went out of the city.

**Writing**

It may perhaps be said, “We find [Jesus] giving in to weeping, to hunger and to thirst. Should we not suppose Him liable to all the other affections of human nature?” If we fail to understand the mystery of His tears, hunger, and thirst, let us remember that He who wept also raised the dead to life; that He did not weep for the death of Lazarus, but rejoiced; and that He who thirsted gave from Himself rivers of living water. . . . Again, He who hungered could condemn the tree which offered no fruit for His hunger, but how could His nature be overcome by hunger if He still had the power to strike the green tree barren by His word? And if, besides the mystery of weeping, hunger, and thirst, the flesh He assumed, that is His entire humanness, was exposed to our weaknesses, even then it was not left to suffer from human indignities. His weeping was not for Himself; His thirst needed no water to quench it; His hunger, no food to stay it. He did not just eat or drink or weep to satisfy His appetites. Rather, He conformed to the habits of the human body in order to prove that His own human body was real—to satisfy the custom of human bodies by doing just what human bodies do.

—Hilary of Poitiers

**Hymnody**

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
 In lowly pomp ride on to die.  
 Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain,  
 Then take, O God, Thy pow’r and reign.

—Ride On, Ride On in Majesty  
 (LSB 441:5)

## Prayer of the Day

God of our salvation, Your beloved Son entered the Holy City to shouts of “Hosanna!” for truly He came in the name of the Lord. Give us faith to grasp the mystery of His suffering, death, and resurrection on our behalf as we journey with Him this Lenten season to the cross and beyond that to the empty tomb; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1005)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Seventh Petition and Conclusion

But deliver us from evil.

In the Greek text this petition reads, “Deliver or preserve us from the evil one,” or “the hateful one.” It looks like Jesus was speaking about the devil, like He would summarize every petition in one. So the entire substance of all our prayer is directed against our chief enemy. For it is he who hinders among us everything that we pray for: God’s name or honor, God’s kingdom and will, our daily bread, a cheerful good conscience, and so forth.

—Large Catechism III 113

Included in this petition [is] whatever evil may happen to us under the devil’s kingdom: poverty, shame, death, and in short, all the agonizing misery and heartache of which there is such an unnumbered multitude on earth. Since the devil is not only a liar, but also a murderer [John 8:44], he constantly seeks our life. He wreaks his vengeance whenever he can afflict our bodies with misfortune and harm. Therefore, it happens that he often breaks men’s necks or

drives them to insanity, drowns some, and moves many to commit suicide and to many other terrible disasters [e.g., Mark 9:17–22]. So there is nothing for us to do upon earth but to pray against this archenemy without stopping. For unless God preserved us, we would not be safe from this enemy even for an hour.

—Large Catechism III 115–116

If we are to be preserved and delivered from all evil, God’s name must first be hallowed in us, His kingdom must be with us, and His will must be done. After that He will finally preserve us from sin and shame, and, besides, from everything that may hurt or harm us.

—Large Catechism III 118

Amen.

But all depends upon this, that we learn also to say “Amen.” This means that we do not doubt that our prayer is surely heard and that what we pray shall be done [2 Corinthians 1:20]. This is nothing else than the word of undoubting faith, which does not pray on a dare but knows that God will not lie to him [Titus 1:2]. For He has promised to grant it.

—Large Catechism III 119–120

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
II 84–90

**FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup> O God, you have rejected us,  
broken our de- | fenses;\*  
you have been angry; oh, re- | store us.

<sup>9</sup> Who will bring me to the fortified | city?;\*  
Who will lead me to | Edom?

<sup>10</sup> Have you not rejected us, | O God?;\*  
You do not go forth, O God,  
with our | armies.

<sup>11</sup> Oh, grant us help a- | gainst the foe,\*  
for vain is the salva- | tion of man!

<sup>12</sup> With God we shall do | valiantly;\*  
it is he who will tread | down our foes.  
—Psalm 60:1, 9–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 60, Psalm 102*

**Old Testament Reading:**

**Genesis 41:28–57**

[Joseph Interprets Pharaoh’s Dreams]

<sup>28</sup>“It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>29</sup>There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, <sup>30</sup>but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, <sup>31</sup>and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. <sup>32</sup>And the doubling of Pharaoh’s dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about. <sup>33</sup>Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. <sup>34</sup>Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. <sup>35</sup>And let

them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. <sup>36</sup>That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine.”

Joseph Rises to Power

<sup>37</sup>This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. <sup>38</sup>And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?” <sup>39</sup>Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. <sup>40</sup>You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.” <sup>41</sup>And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” <sup>42</sup>Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. <sup>43</sup>And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, “Bow the knee!” Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. <sup>44</sup>Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” <sup>45</sup>And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphenath-paneah. And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

<sup>46</sup>Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. <sup>47</sup>During the seven plentiful years

the earth produced abundantly,<sup>48</sup> and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it.<sup>49</sup> And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

<sup>50</sup>Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphra priest of On, bore them to him.<sup>51</sup> Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. “For,” he said, “God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s house.”<sup>52</sup> The name of the second he called Ephraim, “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

<sup>53</sup>The seven years of plenty that occurred in the land of Egypt came to an end,<sup>54</sup> and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.<sup>55</sup> When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do.”

<sup>56</sup>So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

## New Testament Reading: Mark 11:20–33

The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree

<sup>20</sup>As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots.

<sup>21</sup>And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed

has withered.”<sup>22</sup> And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God.<sup>23</sup> Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.<sup>24</sup> Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.<sup>25</sup> And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

<sup>27</sup>And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him,<sup>28</sup> and they said to him, “By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?”<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.<sup>30</sup> Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.”<sup>31</sup> And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’<sup>32</sup> But shall we say, ‘From man?’”—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet.<sup>33</sup> So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

## Writing

The faith that justifies . . . is to believe in God’s promise. In the promise, for Christ’s sake, forgiveness of sins and justification are freely offered. And so that no one may suppose that this is mere knowledge, we will add further: it is to want and to receive the

offered promise of forgiveness of sins and of justification.

The difference between this faith and the righteousness of the Law can be easily discerned. Faith is the divine service (*latreia*) that receives the benefits offered by God. The righteousness of the Law is the divine service (*latreia*) that offers to God our merits. God wants to be worshiped through faith so that we receive from Him those things He promises and offers.

Whenever we speak of justifying faith, we must keep in mind that these three objects belong together: the promise, grace, and Christ's merits as the price and atonement. The promise is received through faith. Grace excludes our merits and means that the benefit is offered only through mercy. Christ's merits are the price, because there must be a certain atonement for our sins. Scripture frequently cries out for mercy; the Holy Fathers often say that we are saved by mercy. Therefore, whenever mercy is mentioned, we must keep in mind that faith, which receives the promise of mercy, is required there. Again, whenever we speak about faith, we want an object of faith to be understood, namely, the promised mercy. For faith justifies and saves, not because it is a worthy work in itself, but only because it receives the promised mercy.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession IV (II) 48–49, 53–56

## Hymnody

At the name of Jesus  
Ev'ry knee shall bow,  
Ev'ry tongue confess Him  
King of glory now.  
'Tis the Father's pleasure  
We should call Him Lord,  
Who from the beginning  
Was the mighty Word.

—At the Name of Jesus (*LSB* 512:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
Your mercies are new every morning; and  
though we deserve only punishment, You  
receive us as Your children and provide for  
all our needs of body and soul. Grant that  
we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful  
goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits,  
and serve You in willing obedience; through  
Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives  
and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one  
God, now and forever. (*L26*)

## Lenten Catechesis: Holy Baptism

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” [Matthew 28:19 *NIV*]

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” [Mark 16:16 *NIV*]

St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having

the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.” [Titus 3:5–8 NIV]

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” [Romans 6:4 NIV]

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord III 1–7

## MONDAY—LENT 4

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, how many | are my foes!\*  
Many are rising a- | gainst me;

<sup>2</sup>many are saying | of my soul,\*  
there is no salvation for | him in God.

<sup>3</sup>But you, O LORD, are a shield a- | bout me,\*  
my glory, and the lifter | of my head.

<sup>4</sup>I cried aloud | to the LORD,\*  
and he answered me from his | holy hill.

<sup>5</sup>I lay | down and slept;\*  
I woke again, for the LORD  
sus- | tained me.

<sup>6</sup>I will not be afraid of many thousands  
of | people\*  
who have set themselves against  
me | all around.

<sup>7</sup>Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God! For you  
strike all my enemies | on the cheek,\*  
you break the teeth of the | wicked.

<sup>8</sup>Salvation belongs | to the LORD;\*  
your blessing be on your | people!

—Psalm 3

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 7, Psalm 130*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 42:1–34, 38

Joseph’s Brothers Go to Egypt

<sup>1</sup>When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you look at one another?” <sup>2</sup>And he said, “Behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die.” <sup>3</sup>So ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. <sup>4</sup>But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph’s brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might happen to him. <sup>5</sup>Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

<sup>6</sup>Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph’s brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. <sup>7</sup>Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. “Where do you come from?” he said. They said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.” <sup>8</sup>And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. <sup>9</sup>And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them. And he said to them, “You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land.” <sup>10</sup>They said to him, “No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food. <sup>11</sup>We are all sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants have never been spies.”

<sup>12</sup>He said to them, “No, it is the nakedness of the land that you have come to see.” <sup>13</sup>And they said, “We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more.” <sup>14</sup>But Joseph said to them, “It is as I

said to you. You are spies. <sup>15</sup>By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here. <sup>16</sup>Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. Or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.” <sup>17</sup>And he put them all together in custody for three days.

<sup>18</sup>On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God: <sup>19</sup>if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, <sup>20</sup>and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die.” And they did so. <sup>21</sup>Then they said to one another, “In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us.” <sup>22</sup>And Reuben answered them, “Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood.” <sup>23</sup>They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them. <sup>24</sup>Then he turned away from them and wept. And he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. <sup>25</sup>And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to replace every man’s money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them.

<sup>26</sup>Then they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed. <sup>27</sup>And as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey

fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack. <sup>28</sup>He said to his brothers, “My money has been put back; here it is in the mouth of my sack!” At this their hearts failed them, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, “What is this that God has done to us?”

<sup>29</sup>When they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying, <sup>30</sup>“The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us and took us to be spies of the land. <sup>31</sup>But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we have never been spies. <sup>32</sup>We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.’ <sup>33</sup>Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way. <sup>34</sup>Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I shall know that you are not spies but honest men, and I will deliver your brother to you, and you shall trade in the land.’” . . .

<sup>38</sup>But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.”

## New Testament Reading: Mark 12:1–12

The Parable of the Tenants

<sup>1</sup>And he began to speak to them in parables. “A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country. <sup>2</sup>When the season came, he sent a servant

to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. <sup>3</sup>And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>4</sup>Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. <sup>5</sup>And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. <sup>6</sup>He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, "They will respect my son." <sup>7</sup>But those tenants said to one another, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." <sup>8</sup>And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. <sup>9</sup>What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. <sup>10</sup>Have you not read this Scripture:

"The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone;  
<sup>11</sup>this was the Lord's doing,  
and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

<sup>12</sup>And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.

## Writing

I find to this day seven abominations in my heart: (1) An inclination to unbelief. (2) Suddenly forgetting the love and mercy that Christ shows us. (3) A leaning to the works of the Law. (4) Wanderings and coldness in prayer. (5) Forgetting to watch for that which I have prayed for. (6) A tendency to murmur because I have no more, and yet a willingness to abuse what I have. (7) I can do none of those things which God commands me, but my corruptions will thrust themselves upon me so that 'When I would do good, evil is

present with me.' These things I continually see and feel and am afflicted and oppressed with; yet the wisdom of God orders them for my good. (1) They make me abhor myself. (2) They keep me from trusting my heart. (3) They convince me of the insufficiency of all inherent righteousness. (4) They show me the necessity of flying to Jesus. (5) They press me to pray to God. (6) They show me the need I have to watch and be sober. (7) And they provoke me to look to God, through Christ, to help me and carry me through this world. Amen.

—John Bunyan

## Hymnody

This Lamb is Christ, the soul's great friend,  
The Lamb of God, our Savior,  
Whom God the Father chose to send  
To gain for us His favor.  
"Go forth, My Son," the Father said,  
"And free My children from their dread  
Of guilt and condemnation.  
The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,  
But by Your passion they will share  
The fruit of Your salvation."

—A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth  
(LSB 438:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honor and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A79)

## Lenten Catechesis: What is Baptism?

Every Christian also ought to have at least an ordinary, brief instruction about the Sacraments, because without them he cannot be a Christian. Unfortunately, up to now, no instruction about them has been given. But, in the first place, we take up Baptism, by which we are first received into the Christian Church [John 3:5].

—Large Catechism IV 1–2

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. [Matthew 28:19 NIV]

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” [Mark 16:16 NIV]

—Small Catechism

Here [in the words of Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:16] stand God’s commandment and institution. Let us not doubt that Baptism is divine. It is not made up or invented by people. . . . Baptism is no human plaything, but it is instituted by God Himself. Furthermore, Baptism is most solemnly and strictly commanded so that we must be baptized or we cannot be saved. . . . It is of the greatest importance that we value Baptism as excellent, glorious, and exalted. We contend and fight for Baptism chiefly because the world is now so full of sects arguing that Baptism is an outward thing and that outward things are of no benefit. But let Baptism be a thoroughly outward thing. Here stand God’s Word and command, which institute, establish, and confirm Baptism. What God institutes and commands cannot be an empty thing. It

must be a most precious thing, even though it looked like it had less value than a straw.

—Large Catechism IV 6–9

To be baptized in God’s name is to be baptized not by men, but by God Himself. Therefore, although it is performed by human hands, it is still truly God’s own work. From this fact everyone may readily conclude that Baptism is a far higher work than any work performed by a man or a saint. For what work can we do that is greater than God’s work?

—Large Catechism IV 10

From this now learn a proper understanding of the subject and how to answer the question of what Baptism is. It is not mere ordinary water, but water comprehended in God’s Word and command and sanctified by them [Ephesians 5:26–27]. So it is nothing other than a divine water. Not that the water in itself is nobler than other water, but that God’s Word and command are added to it.

—Large Catechism IV 14

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord III 8–17

## TUESDAY—LENT 4

### Psalmody

<sup>16</sup> Better is the little that the | righteous has\*  
than the abundance of many | wicked.

<sup>17</sup> For the arms of the wicked  
shall be | broken,\*  
but the LORD upholds the | righteous.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD knows the days of  
the | blameless,\*  
and their heritage will remain for- | ever;  
<sup>19</sup>they are not put to shame in | evil times;\*  
in the days of famine  
they have a- | bundance.  
<sup>20</sup>But the wicked will perish;  
the enemies of the LORD  
are like the glory of the | pastures;\*  
they vanish—like smoke  
they van- | ish away.  
—Psalm 37:16–20

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 37, Psalm 143*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 43:1–28

Joseph's Brothers Return to Egypt

<sup>1</sup>Now the famine was severe in the land.  
<sup>2</sup>And when they had eaten the grain that  
they had brought from Egypt, their father  
said to them, “Go again, buy us a little food.”  
<sup>3</sup>But Judah said to him, “The man solemnly  
warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my  
face unless your brother is with you.’” <sup>4</sup>If you  
will send our brother with us, we will go  
down and buy you food. <sup>5</sup>But if you will not  
send him, we will not go down, for the man  
said to us, ‘You shall not see my face, unless  
your brother is with you.’” <sup>6</sup>Israel said,  
“Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the  
man that you had another brother?” <sup>7</sup>They  
replied, “The man questioned us carefully  
about ourselves and our kindred, saying, ‘Is  
your father still alive? Do you have another  
brother?’ What we told him was in answer  
to these questions. Could we in any way  
know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother  
down?’” <sup>8</sup>And Judah said to Israel his father,  
“Send the boy with me, and we will arise and  
go, that we may live and not die, both we  
and you and also our little ones. <sup>9</sup>I will be a

pledge of his safety. From my hand you shall  
require him. If I do not bring him back to  
you and set him before you, then let me bear  
the blame forever. <sup>10</sup>If we had not delayed, we  
would now have returned twice.”

<sup>11</sup>Then their father Israel said to them,  
“If it must be so, then do this: take some of  
the choice fruits of the land in your bags,  
and carry a present down to the man, a  
little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh,  
pistachio nuts, and almonds. <sup>12</sup>Take double  
the money with you. Carry back with you  
the money that was returned in the mouth  
of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight.  
<sup>13</sup>Take also your brother, and arise, go again  
to the man. <sup>14</sup>May God Almighty grant you  
mercy before the man, and may he send back  
your other brother and Benjamin. And as  
for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am  
bereaved.”

<sup>15</sup>So the men took this present, and  
they took double the money with them, and  
Benjamin. They arose and went down to  
Egypt and stood before Joseph.

<sup>16</sup>When Joseph saw Benjamin with them,  
he said to the steward of his house, “Bring the  
men into the house, and slaughter an animal  
and make ready, for the men are to dine with  
me at noon.” <sup>17</sup>The man did as Joseph told  
him and brought the men to Joseph's house.  
<sup>18</sup>And the men were afraid because they were  
brought to Joseph's house, and they said, “It is  
because of the money, which was replaced in  
our sacks the first time, that we are brought in,  
so that he may assault us and fall upon us to  
make us servants and seize our donkeys.” <sup>19</sup>So  
they went up to the steward of Joseph's house  
and spoke with him at the door of the house,  
<sup>20</sup>and said, “Oh, my lord, we came down the  
first time to buy food. <sup>21</sup>And when we came  
to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and

there was each man's money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight. So we have brought it again with us, <sup>22</sup>and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." <sup>23</sup>He replied, "Peace to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them. <sup>24</sup>And when the man had brought the men into Joseph's house and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their donkeys fodder, <sup>25</sup>they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there.

<sup>26</sup>When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present that they had with them and bowed down to him to the ground. <sup>27</sup>And he inquired about their welfare and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" <sup>28</sup>They said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 12:13–27

#### Paying Taxes to Caesar

<sup>13</sup>And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. <sup>14</sup>And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" <sup>15</sup>But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." <sup>16</sup>And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is

this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him.

#### The Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection

<sup>18</sup>And Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying, <sup>19</sup>"Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>20</sup>There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. <sup>21</sup>And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. <sup>22</sup>And the seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. <sup>23</sup>In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife."

<sup>24</sup>Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? <sup>25</sup>For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup>And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? <sup>27</sup>He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong."

### Writing

Faith . . . is a firm trust that Christ, the Son of God, stands in our place and has taken all our sins upon his shoulders and that he is the eternal satisfaction for our sin and reconciles us with God the Father. He who has this faith . . . devil nor hell nor sin can harm him. Why? Because God is his protector and defender. And when I have this

faith, then I am certain God is fighting for me; I can defy the devil, death, hell, and sin, and all the harm with which they threaten me. This is the great, inestimable treasure given us in Christ, which no man can describe or grasp with words. . . .

[You are holy] if you believe that God steps in for you and stakes all he has and his blood for you, as if he were saying: Fall in behind me without fear or delay, and then let us see what can harm you; come devil, death, sin, and hell, and all creation, I shall go before you, for I will be your rear guard and your vanguard (Isa. 52:12); trust me and boldly rely upon me. He who believes that can not be harmed by devil, hell, sin, or death.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

The God of Abr’ham praise,  
Who reigns enthroned above;  
Ancient of everlasting days  
And God of love.  
Jehovah, great I AM!  
By earth and heav’n confessed;  
I bow and bless the sacred name  
Forever blest.

—The God of Abraham Praise  
(LSB 798:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God heavenly Father, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, Your servant Moses proclaimed the resurrection to the children of Israel to give them hope in the midst of their darkness. As we journey to the darkness of the cross, give us hope to look beyond it to the light of the resurrection; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. (1007)

### Lenten Catechesis:

#### What benefits does Baptism give?

Since we know now what Baptism is and how it is to be regarded, we must also learn why and for what purpose it is instituted. We must learn what it profits, gives, and works. For this also we cannot find a better resource than Christ’s words quoted above, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” [Mark 16:16]. . . . The power, work, profit, fruit and purpose of Baptism is this—to save [1 Peter 3:21]. For no one is baptized in order that he may become a prince, but, as the words say, that he “be saved.” We know that to be saved is nothing other than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil [Colossians 1:13–14]. It means to enter into Christ’s kingdom [John 3:5], and to live with Him forever.

—Large Catechism IV 23–25

Here you see again how highly and preciously we should value Baptism, because in it we receive such an unspeakable treasure. This also proves that it cannot be ordinary, mere water. For mere water could not do such a thing. But the Word does it and, as I said above, so does the fact that God’s name is included in Baptism. Where God’s name is, there must also be life and salvation [Psalm 54:1]. So Baptism may certainly be called a divine, blessed, fruitful, and gracious water. Such power is given to Baptism by the Word that is a washing of new birth, as St. Paul also calls it in Titus 3:5.

—Large Catechism IV 26–27

What God does and works in us He intends to work through such outward ordinances. Therefore, wherever He speaks—indeed, no matter what direction or by whatever means He speaks—faith must look there. It must hold to that object. Now here

we have the words “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” [Mark 16:16]. What else can these words refer to but Baptism, that is, to the water included in God’s ordinance? Therefore, it makes sense that whoever rejects Baptism rejects God’s Word, faith, and Christ, who directs us to Baptism and binds us to Baptism.

—Large Catechism IV 30–31

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord III 18–23

## WEDNESDAY—LENT 4

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my in- | tegrity,\*

and I have trusted in the LORD without | wavering.

<sup>2</sup>Prove me, O LORD, and | try me;\* test my heart | and my mind.

<sup>3</sup>For your steadfast love is be- | fore my eyes,\* and I walk in your | faithfulness.

<sup>4</sup>I do not sit with men of | falsehood,\* nor do I consort with | hypocrites.

<sup>5</sup>I hate the assembly of evil- | doers,\* and I will not sit with the | wicked.

<sup>6</sup>I wash my hands in | innocence\* and go around your altar, | O LORD,

<sup>7</sup>proclaiming thanksgiving | aloud,\* and telling all your | wondrous deeds.

—Psalm 26:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 16, Psalm 6*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 44:1–18, 32–34

Joseph Tests His Brothers

<sup>1</sup>Then he commanded the steward of his house, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his sack, <sup>2</sup>and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain.” And he did as Joseph told him.

<sup>3</sup>As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. <sup>4</sup>They had gone only a short distance from the city. Now Joseph said to his steward, “Up, follow after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? <sup>5</sup>Is it not from this that my lord drinks, and by this that he practices divination? You have done evil in doing this.’”

<sup>6</sup>When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words. <sup>7</sup>They said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing! <sup>8</sup>Behold, the money that we found in the mouths of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house?

<sup>9</sup>Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die, and we also will be my lord’s servants.” <sup>10</sup>He said, “Let it be as you say: he who is found with it shall be my servant, and the rest of you shall be innocent.” <sup>11</sup>Then each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack.

<sup>12</sup>And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. <sup>13</sup>Then they tore their clothes, and every man loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

<sup>14</sup>When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house, he was still there. They

fell before him to the ground. <sup>15</sup>Joseph said to them, “What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that a man like me can indeed practice divination?” <sup>16</sup>And Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; behold, we are my lord’s servants, both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found.” <sup>17</sup>But he said, “Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the man in whose hand the cup was found shall be my servant. But as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

<sup>18</sup>Then Judah went up to him and said, “Oh, my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord’s ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself. . . .

<sup>32</sup>“For your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life.’ <sup>33</sup>Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers.

<sup>34</sup>For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I fear to see the evil that would find my father.”

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 12:28–44**

The Great Commandment

<sup>28</sup>And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup>And you shall love the Lord your God with all your

heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ <sup>31</sup>The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” <sup>32</sup>And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. <sup>33</sup>And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” <sup>34</sup>And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Whose Son Is the Christ?

<sup>35</sup>And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? <sup>36</sup>David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared,

“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,  
Sit at my right hand,  
until I put your enemies under  
your feet.’

<sup>37</sup>David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?” And the great throng heard him gladly.

Beware of the Scribes

<sup>38</sup>And in his teaching he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces <sup>39</sup>and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, <sup>40</sup>who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

The Widow's Offering

<sup>41</sup>And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. <sup>42</sup>And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. <sup>43</sup>And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. <sup>44</sup>For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

**Writing**

Throughout the Prophets and the Psalms this worship (this *latreia*) is highly praised, even though the Law does not teach the free forgiveness of sins. The Old Testament Fathers knew the promise about Christ, that God for Christ's sake wanted to forgive sins. They understood that Christ would be the price for our sins. They knew that our works are not a price for so great a matter. So they received free mercy and forgiveness of sins by faith, just as the saints in the New Testament. To this point belong those frequent repetitions about mercy and faith that appear in the Psalms and the Prophets. For example, Psalm 130:3 says, "If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" Here David confesses his sins and does not list his merits. He adds, "But with You there is forgiveness" (v. 4). Here he comforts himself by his trust in God's mercy, and he refers to the promise, "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I hope" (v. 5). This means, "Because You have promised the forgiveness of sins, I am sustained by Your promise." Therefore, the Fathers also were justified, not by the Law, but by the promise

and faith. It is amazing that the adversaries diminish faith to such a degree, even though they see that it is everywhere praised as a great service. For example, Psalm 50:15 says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you." God wants Himself to be known, He wants Himself to be worshiped, so that we receive benefits from Him and receive them because of His mercy, not because of our merits. This is the richest consolation in all afflictions. The adversaries ban such consolation when they diminish and disparage faith and teach only that by means of works and merits people interact with God.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession IV (II) 57–60

**Hymnody**

Hail to the Lord's anointed,  
Great David's greater Son!  
Hail, in the time appointed,  
His reign on earth begun!  
He comes to break oppression,  
To set the captive free,  
To take away transgression  
And rule in equity.

—Hail to the Lord's Anointed  
(LSB 398:1)

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, cleanse us by the power of Your redeeming blood that in purity and peace we may worship and adore Your holy name; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B84)

**Lenten Catechesis:****How can water do such great things?**

In the water is God's Word or command and God's name. His name is a treasure greater and nobler than heaven and earth. . . .

Baptism is quite a different thing from all other water. This is not because of its natural quality but because something more noble is added here. God Himself stakes His honor, His power, and His might on it. Therefore, Baptism is not only natural water, but a divine, heavenly, holy, and blessed water, and whatever other terms we can find to praise it. This is all because of the Word, which is a heavenly, holy Word, which no one can praise enough. For it has, and is able to do, all that God is and can do [Isaiah 55:10–11]. In this way it also gets its essence as a Sacrament, as St. Augustine also taught, "When the Word is joined to the element or natural substance, it becomes a Sacrament," that is, a holy and divine matter and sign.

—Large Catechism IV 16–18

You must honor Baptism and consider it glorious because of the Word. For God Himself has honored it both by words and deeds. Furthermore, He has confirmed it with miracles from heaven. Do you think that it was a joke that, when Christ was baptized, the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit descended visibly, and everything was divine glory and majesty [Luke 3:21–22]?

—Large Catechism IV 21

I encourage again that these two—the water and the Word—by no means be separated from each other and parted. For if the Word is separated from it, the water is the same as the water that the servant cooks with. It may indeed be called a bathkeeper's baptism. But when the Word is added, as

God has ordained, it is a Sacrament. It is called Christ's Baptism.

—Large Catechism IV 22

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord III 24–29

**THURSDAY—LENT 4****Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> God has taken his place in the divine | council;\*  
in the midst of the gods he holds | judgment:
- <sup>2</sup> "How long will you judge un- | justly\*  
and show partiality to the | wicked?"
- <sup>3</sup> Give justice to the weak and the | fatherless;\*  
maintain the right of the afflicted  
and the | destitute.
- <sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and the | needy;\*  
deliver them from the hand  
of the | wicked."
- <sup>5</sup> They have neither knowledge  
nor understanding, they walk  
about in | darkness;\*  
all the foundations of the earth  
are | shaken.
- <sup>6</sup> I said, | "You are gods,\*  
sons of the Most High, | all of you;
- <sup>7</sup> nevertheless, like men | you shall die,\*  
and fall like | any prince."
- <sup>8</sup> Arise, O God, | judge the earth,\*  
for you shall inherit all the | nations!  
—Psalm 82

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 18, Psalm 32*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Genesis 45:1–20, 24–28**

Joseph Provides for His Brothers and Family

<sup>1</sup>Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, “Make everyone go out from me.” So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup>And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. <sup>3</sup>And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

<sup>4</sup>So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup>And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup>For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup>And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. <sup>8</sup>So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. <sup>10</sup>You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. <sup>11</sup>There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.’ <sup>12</sup>And now your eyes see,

and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. <sup>13</sup>You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.” <sup>14</sup>Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. <sup>15</sup>And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

<sup>16</sup>When the report was heard in Pharaoh’s house, “Joseph’s brothers have come,” it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. <sup>17</sup>And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan, <sup>18</sup>and take your father and your households, and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land.’” <sup>19</sup>And you, Joseph, are commanded to say, ‘Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. <sup>20</sup>Have no concern for your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’” . . .

<sup>24</sup>Then he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, “Do not quarrel on the way.”

<sup>25</sup>So they went up out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. <sup>26</sup>And they told him, “Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.” And his heart became numb, for he did not believe them. <sup>27</sup>But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. <sup>28</sup>And Israel said, “It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

**New Testament Reading: Mark 13:1–23**

Jesus Foretells Destruction of the Temple

<sup>1</sup>And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” <sup>2</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

Signs of the Close of the Age

<sup>3</sup>And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup>“Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?” <sup>5</sup>And Jesus began to say to them, “See that no one leads you astray. <sup>6</sup>Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. <sup>7</sup>And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>8</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

<sup>9</sup>“But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. <sup>10</sup>And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. <sup>11</sup>And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. <sup>12</sup>And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. <sup>13</sup>And you will

be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

The Abomination of Desolation

<sup>14</sup>“But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>15</sup>Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, <sup>16</sup>and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. <sup>17</sup>And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! <sup>18</sup>Pray that it may not happen in winter. <sup>19</sup>For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. <sup>20</sup>And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. <sup>21</sup>And then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. <sup>22</sup>For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. <sup>23</sup>But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.”

**Writing**

The argument against the power of Christ’s Passion: The devil exercises his power over men by tempting them and molesting their bodies. But even after the Passion he continues to do the same to men. Therefore we are not delivered from his power through Christ’s Passion.

Aquinas responds: God permits the devil to tempt men’s souls and harass their bodies, yet there is a remedy provided for humanity through Christ’s Passion, whereby a person

can safeguard himself against the enemy's assaults, so as not to be dragged down into the destruction of everlasting death. And all who resisted the devil previous to the Passion [in Old Testament times] were enabled to do so through faith in the Passion, although it was not yet accomplished.

A further argument is put forth: According to Heb. 10:14 ["For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified"], the might of Christ's Passion endures forever. But deliverance from the devil's power is not found everywhere, since there are still idolaters in many regions of the world; nor will it endure forever, because in the time of Antichrist he will be especially active in using his power to hurt of men, because it is said of him (2 Thess. 2:9[-10]): "The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception." Consequently it seems that Christ's Passion does not deliver the human race from the power of the devil.

Aquinas responds: God permits the devil to deceive men by certain persons, and in times and places, according to the hidden motive of His judgments. Still, there is always a remedy provided through Christ's Passion for defending themselves against the wicked snares of the demons, even in Antichrist's time. But if any man neglect to make use of this remedy, it detracts nothing from the efficacy of Christ's Passion.

—Thomas Aquinas

## Hymnody

The final trumpet then shall sound  
 And all the earth be shaken,  
 And all who rest beneath the ground  
 Shall from their sleep awaken.  
 But all who live will in that hour,  
 By God's almighty, boundless pow'r,  
 Be changed at His commanding.  
 —The Day Is Surely Drawing Near  
 (LSB 508:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, by Your bountiful goodness release us from the bonds of our sins, which by reason of our weakness we have brought upon ourselves, that we may stand firm until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B86)

## Lenten Catechesis: What does such baptizing with water signify?

We are sunk under the water, which passes over us, and afterward are drawn out again. These two parts . . . signify Baptism's power and work. It is nothing other than putting to death the old Adam and affecting the new man's resurrection after that [Romans 6:4–6]. Both of these things must take place in us all our lives. So a truly Christian life is nothing other than a daily Baptism, once begun and ever to be continued. . . . Without ceasing . . . we always keep purging away whatever belongs to the old Adam. Then what belongs to the new man may come forth. But what is the old man? It is what is born in human beings from Adam: anger, hate, envy, unchastity, stinginess, laziness, arrogance—yes, unbelief.

The old man is infected with all vices and has by nature nothing good in him [Romans 7:18]. Now, when we have come into Christ's kingdom [John 3:5], these things must daily decrease. The longer we live the more we become gentle, patient, meek, and ever turn away from unbelief, greed, hatred, envy, and arrogance.

—Large Catechism IV 65

Faith alone makes the person worthy to receive profitably the saving, divine water. Since these blessings are presented here and promised through the words in and with the water, they cannot be received in any other way than by believing them with the heart [Romans 10:9]. Without faith it profits nothing, even though Baptism is in itself a divine overwhelming treasure. Therefore, this single phrase, "Whoever believes," does so much.

—Large Catechism IV 33–34

You see plainly that this is no work done here by us, but a treasure, which God gives us and faith grasps [Ephesians 2:8–9]. It is like the benefit of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, which is not a work, but a treasure included in the Word. It is offered to us and received by faith.

—Large Catechism IV 37

When our sins and conscience oppress us, we strengthen ourselves and take comfort and say, "Nevertheless, I am baptized. And if I am baptized, it is promised to me that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body."

—Large Catechism IV 44

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
III 30–35

## FRIDAY—LENT 4

### Psalmody

<sup>11</sup> I will remember the deeds | of the LORD;\*  
yes, I will remember your won- | ders  
of old.

<sup>12</sup> I will ponder | all your work,\*  
and meditate on your | mighty deeds.

<sup>13</sup> Your way, O God, is | holy.\*  
What god is great | like our God?

<sup>14</sup> You are the God who works | wonders;\*  
you have made known your might  
among the | peoples.

<sup>15</sup> You with your arm redeemed  
your | people,\*  
the children of Jacob and | Joseph.

—Psalm 77:11–15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 17, Psalm 38*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 47:1–31

Jacob's Family Settles in Goshen

<sup>1</sup>So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, "My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan. They are now in the land of Goshen." <sup>2</sup>And from among his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. <sup>3</sup>Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, as our fathers were." <sup>4</sup>They said to Pharaoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your

servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. And now, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen." <sup>5</sup>Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. <sup>6</sup>The land of Egypt is before you. Settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land. Let them settle in the land of Goshen, and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my livestock."

<sup>7</sup>Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father and stood him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. <sup>8</sup>And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many are the days of the years of your life?" <sup>9</sup>And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning." <sup>10</sup>And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from the presence of Pharaoh. <sup>11</sup>Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. <sup>12</sup>And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their dependents.

#### Joseph and the Famine

<sup>13</sup>Now there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine. <sup>14</sup>And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, in exchange for the grain that they bought. And Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. <sup>15</sup>And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land

of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone."

<sup>16</sup>And Joseph answered, "Give your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone." <sup>17</sup>So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and the donkeys. He supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year. <sup>18</sup>And when that year was ended, they came to him the following year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent. The herds of livestock are my lord's. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our land. <sup>19</sup>Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we with our land will be servants to Pharaoh. And give us seed that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate."

<sup>20</sup>So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for all the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe on them. The land became Pharaoh's. <sup>21</sup>As for the people, he made servants of them from one end of Egypt to the other. <sup>22</sup>Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh and lived on the allowance that Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land.

<sup>23</sup>Then Joseph said to the people, "Behold, I have this day bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Now here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. <sup>24</sup>And at the harvests you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and as food for yourselves and your households, and as food for your little ones." <sup>25</sup>And they said, "You have saved our lives; may it please

my lord, we will be servants to Pharaoh.”

<sup>26</sup>So Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt, and it stands to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; the land of the priests alone did not become Pharaoh’s.

<sup>27</sup>Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly. <sup>28</sup>And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were 147 years.

<sup>29</sup>And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, <sup>30</sup>but let me lie with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place.” He answered, “I will do as you have said.” <sup>31</sup>And he said, “Swear to me”; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed.

*Additional Reading: Genesis 48:1–49:28*

### **New Testament Reading: Mark 13:24–37**

The Coming of the Son of Man

<sup>24</sup>“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup>And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

<sup>28</sup>“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup>Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

No One Knows That Day or Hour

<sup>32</sup>“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup>Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. <sup>35</sup>Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—<sup>36</sup>lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. <sup>37</sup>And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

### **Writing**

From the beginning [God] has utterly uprooted all idolatry. Because of idolatry, He has uprooted both heathen people and Jewish people. To this day He overthrows all false worship, so that all who remain therein must finally perish [2 Chronicles 7:19–20]. Proud, powerful, and rich men of the world . . . boast defiantly of their Mammon. They utterly disregard whether God is angry at them or smiles on them. They dare to withstand His wrath, yet they shall not succeed. Before they

are aware of it, they shall be wrecked, with all in which they trusted. . . .

Such hard heads imagine that God overlooks and allows them to rest in security, or that He is entirely ignorant or cares nothing about such matters. Therefore, God must deal a smashing blow and punish them, so that He cannot forget their sin unto their children’s children. In that way, everyone may take note and see that this is no joke to Him. These are the people He means when He says, “those who hate Me” ([Exodus 20:5]; i.e., those who persist in their defiance and pride). Whatever is preached or said to them, they will not listen. When they are rebuked, in order that they may learn to know themselves and make amends before the punishment begins, they become mad and foolish. . . .

But as terrible as these threatenings are, so much more powerful is the consolation in the promise. For those who cling to God alone should be sure that He will show them mercy. In other words, He will show them pure goodness and blessing, not only for themselves, but also to their children and their children’s children, even to the thousandth generation and beyond that. This ought certainly to move and impel us to risk our hearts in all confidence with God [Hebrews 4:16; 10:19–23], if we wish all temporal and eternal good. For the supreme Majesty makes such outstanding offers and presents such heartfelt encouragements and such rich promises.

—Large Catechism I 35–40

## Hymnody

The clouds of judgment gather,  
The time is growing late;  
Be sober and be watchful,  
Our judge is at the gate:  
The judge who comes in mercy,  
The judge who comes in might  
To put an end to evil  
And diadem the right.

—The Clouds of Judgment Gather  
(LSB 513:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, so govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your glorious return, we may persevere in both faith and holiness of living; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B87)

## Lenten Catechesis: Who receives what Baptism gives and profits?

The Baptism of infants is pleasing to Christ, as is proved well enough from His own work. For God sanctifies many of those who have been baptized as infants and has given them the Holy Spirit. There are still many people even today in whom we perceive that they have the Holy Spirit both because of their doctrine and life. It is also given to us by God’s grace that we can explain the Scriptures and come to the knowledge of Christ, which is impossible without the Holy Spirit [1 Corinthians 12:3]. But if God did not accept the Baptism of infants, He would not give the Holy Spirit nor any of His gifts to any of them. In short, during the long time up to this day, no person on earth could have been a Christian. . . . Since the holy Christian Church cannot perish until the

end of the world, the sects must acknowledge that such infant Baptism is pleasing to God. For God can never be opposed to Himself or support falsehood and wickedness, or for its promotion impart His grace and Spirit. . . . The sects shall not take from us or overthrow this article: “I believe in . . . the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.”  
—Large Catechism IV 49–51

Further, we say that we are not very concerned to know whether the person baptized believes or not. For Baptism does not become invalid on that account. But everything depends on God’s Word and command. Now this point . . . rests entirely on what I have said, that Baptism is nothing other than water and God’s Word in and with each other [Ephesians 5:26]. That is, when the Word is added to the water, Baptism is valid, even though faith is lacking. For my faith does not make Baptism, but receives it.

—Large Catechism IV 52–53

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord III 36–43

## SATURDAY—LENT 4

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have | told us,\*  
what deeds you performed in their days,  
in the | days of old:

<sup>2</sup> you with your own hand drove out the nations, but them you | planted;\*  
you afflicted the peoples, but them you | set free;

<sup>3</sup> for not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm | save them,\*  
but your right hand and your arm, and the light of your face, for you de- | lighted in them.

<sup>4</sup> You are my King, | O God;\*  
ordain salvation for | Jacob!  
—Psalm 44:1–4

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 44, Psalm 51*

### Old Testament Reading: Genesis 49:29–50:7, 14–26

Jacob’s Death and Burial

<sup>29</sup>Then he commanded them and said to them, “I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, <sup>30</sup>in the cave that is in the field at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place.

<sup>31</sup>There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah—<sup>32</sup>the field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites.” <sup>33</sup>When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

<sup>50:1</sup>Then Joseph fell on his father’s face and wept over him and kissed him.

<sup>2</sup>And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. <sup>3</sup>Forty days were required for it, for that is how many are required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days.

<sup>4</sup>And when the days of weeping for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, “If now I have found favor

in your eyes, please speak in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, <sup>5</sup>My father made me swear, saying, ‘I am about to die: in my tomb that I hewed out for myself in the land of Canaan, there shall you bury me.’ Now therefore, let me please go up and bury my father. Then I will return.” <sup>6</sup>And Pharaoh answered, “Go up, and bury your father, as he made you swear.” <sup>7</sup>So Joseph went up to bury his father. With him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt. . . .

<sup>14</sup>After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.

#### God’s Good Purposes

<sup>15</sup>When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.” <sup>16</sup>So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this command before he died, <sup>17</sup>‘Say to Joseph, Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.’ And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. <sup>18</sup>His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” <sup>19</sup>But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. <sup>21</sup>So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

#### The Death of Joseph

<sup>22</sup>So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father’s house. Joseph lived 110 years.

<sup>23</sup>And Joseph saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation. The children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were counted as Joseph’s own. <sup>24</sup>And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” <sup>25</sup>Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.” <sup>26</sup>So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 14:1–11

#### The Plot to Kill Jesus

<sup>1</sup>It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, <sup>2</sup>for they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.”

#### Jesus Anointed at Bethany

<sup>3</sup>And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. <sup>4</sup>There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? <sup>5</sup>For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her. <sup>6</sup>But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. <sup>7</sup>For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. <sup>8</sup>She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. <sup>9</sup>And truly, I say

to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”

Judas to Betray Jesus

<sup>10</sup>Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. <sup>11</sup>And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him.

## Writing

God certainly detests and hates sin. Yet He sets forth the promise: “He who has fallen should not despair.” He does not give orders to commit sin; He forbids it. But after sin has been committed and the Law accuses and terrifies the conscience so that sin becomes “sinful beyond measure,” as Rom. 7:13 says—as is apparent here in Joseph’s brothers—then He does not want death to reign, as the prophet testifies: “I do not want the death of the sinner, but that he should be converted and live” (cf. Ezek. 18:23). Just as He abominates sin, so He does not want the man who has fallen to remain in sin when it lives and wounds and torments the conscience through the Law; but He gives a promise and a remedy by which the wounded heart is kept unharmed, lest it despair. The Pharisee cannot lay claim to salvation because of his presumptuousness; nor can David or the robber lay claim to destruction because of his despair.

But one should take the royal road, and sin should be shunned. For although God has promised pardon, as Augustine says, yet He does not promise that you will be sure to return after a fall. Thus Saul and Judas do not return. It is not in our power to take hold

of grace; nor do you know whether you are able to accept the remission that is offered. Therefore one should fear God. He hates both presumption and despair. “Just as I do not want a sinner,” He says, “so I do not want the death of a sinner. But if you have been driven to sin by the wickedness of the devil, and if the Law condemns you and the devil hurls his flaming darts (Eph. 6:16) at you and tries to drive you into hell, I do not want you to die or to despair. No, I want you to flee for refuge to Christ the Savior, who does not want the death of a sinner, just as He does not want a sinner either.”

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Oh, how great is Your compassion,  
Faithful Father, God of grace,  
That with all our fallen race  
In our depth of degradation  
You had mercy so that we  
Might be saved eternally!

—Oh, How Great Is Your Compassion  
(LSB 559:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, Your body was anointed with holy oil by the woman at the house of Simon the leper to prepare it for burial. May Your Church continue to take care of Your body as she feeds Your people the holy food of Your very body and blood for the forgiveness of sins; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1007)

**Lenten Catechesis: Who receives what Baptism gives and profits?**

Baptism does not become invalid even though it is wrongly received or used. As stated above, it is not bound to our faith, but to the Word.

Suppose a Jewish person should come dishonestly today and with evil intent, and we should baptize him in all good faith. We must say that his Baptism is still genuine. For here is the water together with God’s Word, even though the person does not receive it as he should.

—Large Catechism IV 53–54

So you see that the objection of the sectarians is empty. As we have said, even though infants did not believe (which, however, is not the case), still their Baptism would be valid. We have now shown this. No one should rebaptize infants. Nothing is taken away from the Sacrament even though someone approaches it with evil purpose. So he could not be allowed to take it a second time the self-same hour on account of his abuse, as though he had not received the true Sacrament at first. That would blaspheme and profane the Sacrament in the worst way. How dare we think that God’s Word and ordinance should be wrong and invalid because we make a wrong use of it?

—Large Catechism IV 55

I say, if you did not believe then, believe now and say this: The Baptism certainly was right. But I, unfortunately, did not receive it aright. I myself also, and all who are baptized, must say this before God, “I come here in my faith and in that of others. Yet I cannot rest in this, that I believe, and that many people pray for me. But in this I rest, that Baptism is Your Word and command. It is just like when I go

to the Sacrament trusting not in my faith, but in Christ’s Word.”

—Large Catechism IV 56

We bring the child in the conviction and hope that it believes, and we pray that God may grant it faith [Luke 17:2; Ephesians 2:8]. But we do not baptize it for that reason, but solely because of God’s command. Why? Because we know that God does not lie [Titus 1:2].

—Large Catechism IV 57

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord III 44–53

**FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup>“Greatly have they afflicted me | from my youth”—\*  
let Israel | now say—
- <sup>2</sup>“Greatly have they afflicted me | from my youth,\*  
yet they have not prevailed a- | gainst me.
- <sup>3</sup>The plowers plowed up- | on my back;\*  
they made long their | furrows.”
- <sup>4</sup>The LORD is | righteous;\*  
he has cut the cords of the | wicked.
- <sup>5</sup>May all who hate | Zion\*  
be put to shame and turned | backward!
- <sup>6</sup>Let them be like the grass  
on the | housetops,\*  
which withers before it | grows up,
- <sup>7</sup>with which the reaper does not | fill  
his hand\*  
nor the binder of | sheaves his arms,

<sup>8</sup> nor do those who pass by say, “The blessing of the LORD be up- | on you!”

We bless you in the name | of the LORD!”  
—Psalm 129

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 81, Psalm 102*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 1:1–22

Israel Increases Greatly in Egypt

<sup>1</sup>These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: <sup>2</sup>Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, <sup>3</sup>Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, <sup>4</sup>Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. <sup>5</sup>All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. <sup>6</sup>Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. <sup>7</sup>But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

Pharaoh Oppresses Israel

<sup>8</sup>Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup>And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. <sup>10</sup>Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” <sup>11</sup>Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. <sup>12</sup>But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. <sup>13</sup>So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves <sup>14</sup>and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds

of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

<sup>15</sup>Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, <sup>16</sup>“When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” <sup>17</sup>But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. <sup>18</sup>So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?” <sup>19</sup>The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” <sup>20</sup>So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. <sup>21</sup>And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. <sup>22</sup>Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.”

### New Testament Reading: Mark 14:12–31

The Passover with the Disciples

<sup>12</sup>And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?” <sup>13</sup>And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, <sup>14</sup>and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ <sup>15</sup>And he will show you a large upper room furnished

and ready; there prepare for us.”<sup>16</sup> And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

<sup>17</sup>And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. <sup>18</sup>And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” <sup>19</sup>They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, “Is it I?” <sup>20</sup>He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. <sup>21</sup>For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”

Institution of the Lord’s Supper

<sup>22</sup>And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” <sup>23</sup>And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. <sup>24</sup>And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. <sup>25</sup>Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

Jesus Foretells Peter’s Denial

<sup>26</sup>And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. <sup>27</sup>And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ <sup>28</sup>But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” <sup>29</sup>Peter said to him, “Even though they all fall away, I will not.” <sup>30</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” <sup>31</sup>But he said emphatically, “If I must

die with you, I will not deny you.” And they all said the same.

## Writing

The Sacraments are signs of God’s will toward us and not merely signs of people among one another. Those who define Sacraments in the New Testament as signs of grace are correct. There are two things in a Sacrament: a sign and the Word. In the New Testament, the Word is the promise of grace added. The promise of the New Testament is the promise of the forgiveness of sins, “This is My body, which is given for you. This [cup] is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” [See Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:24–25.] So the Word offers the forgiveness of sins. A ceremony is a sort of picture, or seal, as Paul (Romans 4:11) calls it, the Word making known the promise. Therefore, just as the promise is useless unless it is received through faith, so a ceremony is useless unless faith, which is truly confident that the forgiveness of sins is here offered, is added. This faith encourages penitent minds. Just as the Word has been given to excite this faith, so the Sacrament has been set up so that what meets the eyes might move the heart to believe. The Holy Spirit works through these: Word and Sacrament.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession XXIV (XII) 69–70

## Hymnody

When You woke that Thursday morning,  
 Savior, teacher, faithful friend,  
 Thoughts of self and safety scorning,  
 Knowing how the day would end;  
 Lamb of God, foretold for ages,  
 Now at last the hour had come  
 When but One could pay sin's wages:  
 You assumed their dreadful sum.  
 —When You Woke That Thursday  
 Morning (*LSB* 445:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by Your great goodness  
 mercifully look upon Your people that we  
 may be governed and preserved evermore in  
 body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your  
 Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with  
 You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
 forever. (L27)

## Lenten Catechesis: Confession

This is what St. John the Evangelist writes  
 in chapter twenty: The Lord Jesus breathed  
 on His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy  
 Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are  
 forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are  
 not forgiven.” [John 20:22–23 NIV]

—Small Catechism

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
 III 54–58

## MONDAY—LENT 5

### Psalmody

- <sup>9</sup> Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am | in  
 distress;\*  
 my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and  
 my body | also.
- <sup>10</sup> For my life is spent with sorrow, and my  
 years with | sighing;\*  
 my strength fails because of my iniquity,  
 and my bones | waste away.
- <sup>11</sup> Because of all my adversaries I have become  
 a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and  
 an object of dread to my ac- | quaintances;\*  
 those who see me in the street | flee  
 from me.
- <sup>12</sup> I have been forgotten like one | who  
 is dead;\*  
 I have become like a broken | vessel.
- <sup>13</sup> For I hear the whispering of many—terror  
 on | every side!—\*  
 as they scheme together against me,  
 as they plot to | take my life.
- <sup>14</sup> But I trust in you, | O LORD;\*  
 I say, “You | are my God.”  
 —Psalm 31:9–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 116, Psalm 130*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 2:1–22

The Birth of Moses

<sup>1</sup>Now a man from the house of Levi went  
 and took as his wife a Levite woman. <sup>2</sup>The  
 woman conceived and bore a son, and when  
 she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him  
 three months. <sup>3</sup>When she could hide him  
 no longer, she took for him a basket made  
 of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen  
 and pitch. She put the child in it and placed  
 it among the reeds by the river bank. <sup>4</sup>And  
 his sister stood at a distance to know what

would be done to him. <sup>5</sup>Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. <sup>6</sup>When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.” <sup>7</sup>Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” <sup>8</sup>And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. <sup>9</sup>And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him. <sup>10</sup>When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, “Because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

#### Moses Flees to Midian

<sup>11</sup>One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. <sup>12</sup>He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup>When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, “Why do you strike your companion?” <sup>14</sup>He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.” <sup>15</sup>When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

<sup>16</sup>Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. <sup>17</sup>The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. <sup>18</sup>When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, “How is it that you have come home so soon today?” <sup>19</sup>They said, “An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.” <sup>20</sup>He said to his daughters, “Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.” <sup>21</sup>And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. <sup>22</sup>She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.”

#### New Testament Reading: Mark 14:32–52

##### Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

<sup>32</sup>And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” <sup>33</sup>And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. <sup>34</sup>And he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.” <sup>35</sup>And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup>And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” <sup>37</sup>And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? <sup>38</sup>Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” <sup>39</sup>And again he went away and prayed, saying the same

words. <sup>40</sup>And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. <sup>41</sup>And he came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup>Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

#### Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

<sup>43</sup>And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. <sup>44</sup>Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.” <sup>45</sup>And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” And he kissed him. <sup>46</sup>And they laid hands on him and seized him. <sup>47</sup>But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. <sup>48</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? <sup>49</sup>Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled.” <sup>50</sup>And they all left him and fled.

#### A Young Man Flees

<sup>51</sup>And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, <sup>52</sup>but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

### Writing

After man has thus become aware of his sin and is terrified in his heart, he must watch that sin does not remain in his conscience, for this would lead to sheer

despair. Just as [our knowledge of] sin flowed from Christ and was acknowledged by us, so we must pour this sin back on him and free our conscience of it. Therefore beware, lest you do as those perverse people who torture their hearts with their sins and strive to do the impossible, namely, get rid of their sins by running from one good work or penance to another, or by working their way out of this by means of indulgences. . . .

You cast your sins from yourself and onto Christ when you firmly believe that his wounds and sufferings are your sins, to be borne and paid for by him, as we read in Isaiah 53 [:6], “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” St. Peter says, “in his body has he borne our sins on the wood of the cross” [I Pet. 2:24]. St. Paul says, “God has made him a sinner for us, so that through him we would be made just” [II Cor. 5:21]. You must stake everything on these and similar verses. The more your conscience torments you, the more tenaciously must you cling to them. If you do not do that, but presume to still your conscience with your contrition and penance, you will never obtain peace of mind, but will have to despair in the end. If we allow sin to remain in our conscience and try to deal with it there, or if we look at sin in our heart, it will be much too strong for us and will live on forever. But if we behold it resting on Christ and [see it] overcome by his resurrection, and then boldly believe this, even it is dead and nullified. Sin cannot remain on Christ, since it is swallowed up by his resurrection. Now you see no wounds, no pain in him, and no sign of sin. Thus St. Paul declares that “Christ died for our sin and rose for our justification” [Rom. 4:25].

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Watch against the devil's snares  
Lest asleep he find you;  
For indeed no pains he spares  
To deceive and blind you.  
Satan's prey  
Oft are they  
Who secure are sleeping  
And no watch are keeping.

—Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray  
(LSB 663:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, in the Garden of Gethsemane You suffered the agony of drinking from the cup of Your Father's wrath against our sin, being betrayed by a kiss from one of Your own. Give us strength to remain awake as we now wait and watch for Your coming again, knowing that the Father's wrath against us has been satisfied by Your bloody death and vindicating resurrection; for You live and reign with the Father and the Son, one God, now and forever. (1008)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Keys

The authority of the Keys [Matthew 16:19], or the authority of the bishops—according to the Gospel—is a power or commandment of God, to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer Sacraments. Christ sends out His apostles with this command, “As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you . . . Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld” (John 20:21–22). And in Mark 16:15, Christ says, “Go . . . proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation.”

This authority is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, either to many or to individuals, according to their calling. In this way are given not only bodily, but also eternal things: eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. These things cannot reach us except by the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, as Paul says, “The Gospel . . . is the power of God for salvation to everyone that believes” (Romans 1:16). Therefore, the Church has the authority to grant eternal things and exercises this authority only by the ministry of the Word.

The only authority that belongs to the bishops is what they have according to the Gospel, or by divine right, as they say. For they have been given the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. They have no other authority according to the Gospel than the authority to forgive sins, to judge doctrine, to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked people, whose wickedness is known. . . . According to this Gospel authority, as a matter of necessity, by divine right, congregations must obey them, for Luke 10:16 says, “The one who hears you hears Me.” But when they teach or establish anything against the Gospel, then the congregations are forbidden by God's command to obey them.

—Augsburg Confession XXVIII  
5–10, 21–23

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
III 59–67

## TUESDAY—LENT 5

## Psalmsody

<sup>1</sup>I said, “I will guard my ways,  
that I may not sin | with my tongue;\*  
I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so  
long as the wicked are in my | presence.”

<sup>2</sup>I was mute and silent; I held my peace  
to | no avail,\*  
and my dis- | tress grew worse.

<sup>3</sup>My heart became hot within me.  
As I mused, the | fire burned;\*  
then I spoke | with my tongue:

<sup>4</sup>“O LORD, make me know my end  
and what is the measure | of my days;\*  
let me know how fleeting | I am!

<sup>5</sup>Behold, you have made my days  
a few | handbreadths,\*  
and my lifetime is as nothing  
be- | fore you.

Surely all mankind stands as a | mere breath!\*

<sup>6</sup>Surely a man goes about as a | shadow!  
Surely for nothing they are in | turmoil;\*  
man heaps up wealth and does not know  
who will | gather!

<sup>7</sup>“And now, O Lord, for what | do I wait?\*

My hope | is in you.”  
—Psalm 39:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 5, Psalm 143*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Exodus 2:23–3:22**

God Hears Israel's Groaning

<sup>23</sup>During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. <sup>24</sup>And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with

Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup>God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

The Burning Bush

<sup>3:1</sup>Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup>And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. <sup>3</sup>And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” <sup>4</sup>When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>5</sup>Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” <sup>6</sup>And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, <sup>8</sup>and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup>And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup>Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” <sup>11</sup>But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I

should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" <sup>12</sup>He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

<sup>13</sup>Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" <sup>14</sup>God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" <sup>15</sup>God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

<sup>16</sup>Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, "The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, <sup>17</sup>and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'" <sup>18</sup>And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, "The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God." <sup>19</sup>But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. <sup>20</sup>So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.

<sup>21</sup>And I will give this people favor in the sight

of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, <sup>22</sup>but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

## New Testament Reading: Mark 14:53–72

Jesus Before the Council

<sup>53</sup>And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. <sup>54</sup>And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. <sup>55</sup>Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. <sup>56</sup>For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. <sup>57</sup>And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, <sup>58</sup>"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'"

<sup>59</sup>Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. <sup>60</sup>And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" <sup>61</sup>But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" <sup>62</sup>And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." <sup>63</sup>And the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further witnesses do we need? <sup>64</sup>You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" And

they all condemned him as deserving death.  
<sup>65</sup>And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophesy!" And the guards received him with blows.

Peter Denies Jesus

<sup>66</sup>And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, <sup>67</sup>and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus." <sup>68</sup>But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you mean." And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. <sup>69</sup>And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." <sup>70</sup>But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." <sup>71</sup>But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak." <sup>72</sup>And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

## Writing

Ah, now is my Jesus gone!  
 Where is then thy friend now departed,  
 O thou fairest of all the women?  
 Is it granted, can I see him?  
 Where hath he thy friend gone away?  
 Ah, my lamb in tiger's clutches,  
 Ah, where is my Jesus gone?  
 We will with thee now go and seek him.  
 Ah, what shall I say to my spirit  
 When it doth in anguish ask me:  
 Ah, where is my Jesus gone? . . .

The world hath judged me with deceit,  
 With lying and with false conceit,  
 With nets and snares in secret.  
 Lord, me regard  
 In this distress,  
 Guard me from false deceptions. . . .

My Jesus keeps  
 Amidst false lies his silence,  
 To show us by example  
 That his dear mercy's full intention  
 For us to suffer now inclines,  
 In order that within such pain  
 We should resemble him,  
 In persecution keep our silence.

Forbear,  
 Though deceiving tongues may sting me!  
 Though I suffer, innocent,  
 Mocking scorn,  
 Ah, then may the Lord above  
 Give my guiltless heart its vengeance.  
 Who hath thee thus so smitten,  
 My health, and thee tormented,  
 So evilly abused?  
 Thou art indeed no sinner  
 Like us and our descendants;  
 Of evil deeds thou knowest not.

Have mercy Lord,  
 My God, because of this my weeping!  
 Look thou here,  
 Heart and eyes now weep for Thee  
 Bitterly.

Though I now have thee forsaken,  
 I will once again return;  
 For thy Son hath reconciled us  
 Through his agony and death.  
 I deny no whit my guilt;  
 But thy mercy and thy grace  
 Are much greater than the failings  
 Which I ever find within me.

—Johann Sebastian Bach

## Hymnody

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,  
Was there ever grief like His?  
Friends through fear His cause disowning,  
Foes insulting His distress;  
Many hands were raised to wound Him,  
None would intervene to save;  
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him  
Was the stroke that justice gave.

—Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted  
(LSB 451:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, the temple of Your body was destroyed on the cross and three days later raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of the Father. Visit us now with this same body, that we may not deny that we know You, but in faith hear in our ears Your life-giving voice and receive on our lips your very body and blood to strengthen us in times of temptation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Son, one God, now and forever. (1009)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Keys

We will now return to the Gospel, which does not give us counsel and aid against sin in only one way. God is superabundantly generous in His grace: First, through the spoken Word, by which the forgiveness of sins is preached in the whole world [Luke 24:45–47]. This is the particular office of the Gospel. Second, through Baptism. Third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar. Fourth, through the Power of the Keys. Also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren, “Where two or three

are gathered” (Matthew 18:20) and other such verses [especially Romans 1:12].

—Smalcald Articles III IV

The Keys are an office and power given by Christ to the Church for binding and loosing sin [Matthew 16:19]. This applies not only to gross and well-known sins, but also the subtle, hidden sins that are known only to God. As it is written, “Who can discern his errors?” (Psalm 19:12). And St. Paul himself complains that “with my flesh I serve the law of sin” (Romans 7:25). It is not in our power to judge which, how great, and how many the sins are. This belongs to God alone. As it is written, “Enter not into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you” (Psalm 143:2). Paul says, “I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted” (1 Corinthians 4:4).

—Smalcald Articles III VII

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord IV 1–5

## WEDNESDAY—LENT 5

## Psalmody

<sup>6</sup>In my distress I called upon the LORD;  
to my God I | cried for help.\*

From his temple he heard my voice,  
and my cry to him | reached his ears.

<sup>7</sup>Then the earth | reeled and rocked;\*  
the foundations also of the mountains  
trembled and quaked,  
because he was | angry.

- <sup>16</sup>He sent from on high, he | took me;\*  
he drew me out of many | waters.
- <sup>17</sup>He rescued me from my strong | enemy\*  
and from those who hated me,  
for they were too might- | y for me.
- <sup>18</sup>They confronted me in the day  
of my ca- | lamity,\*  
but the LORD was | my support.
- <sup>19</sup>He brought me out into a | broad place;\*  
he rescued me, because he delight- | ed in  
me.
- <sup>20</sup>The LORD dealt with me according  
to my | righteousness;\*  
according to the cleanness of my hands  
he re- | warded me.
- Psalm 18:6–7, 16–20

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 23, Psalm 6*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 4:1–18

Moses Given Powerful Signs

<sup>1</sup>Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’” <sup>2</sup>The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.” <sup>3</sup>And he said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. <sup>4</sup>But the LORD said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—<sup>5</sup>“that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.” <sup>6</sup>Again, the LORD said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. <sup>7</sup>Then God said, “Put your hand back inside your cloak.” So he put his hand back inside

his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. <sup>8</sup>“If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. <sup>9</sup>If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

<sup>10</sup>But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” <sup>11</sup>Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? <sup>12</sup>Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” <sup>13</sup>But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.” <sup>14</sup>Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. <sup>15</sup>You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. <sup>16</sup>He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. <sup>17</sup>And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.”

Moses Returns to Egypt

<sup>18</sup>Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, “Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.”

## New Testament Reading: Mark 15:1–15

Jesus Delivered to Pilate

<sup>1</sup>And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole Council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. <sup>2</sup>And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” And he answered him, “You have said so.” <sup>3</sup>And the chief priests accused him of many things. <sup>4</sup>And Pilate again asked him, “Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you.” <sup>5</sup>But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

<sup>6</sup>Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. <sup>7</sup>And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. <sup>8</sup>And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. <sup>9</sup>And he answered them, saying, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” <sup>10</sup>For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. <sup>11</sup>But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. <sup>12</sup>And Pilate again said to them, “Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” <sup>13</sup>And they cried out again, “Crucify him.” <sup>14</sup>And Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him.” <sup>15</sup>So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

## Writing

In his *Treatise on the Last Words of David*, which Dr. Luther wrote shortly before his death, he says the following:

According to the second, the temporal, human birth Christ was also given the eternal dominion of God, yet temporarily and not from eternity. For the human nature of Christ was not from eternity as His divine nature was. It is computed that Jesus, Mary’s Son, is 1543 years old this year. But from the moment when deity and humanity were united in one Person, the Man, Mary’s Son, is and is called almighty, eternal God, who has eternal dominion, who has created all things and preserves them “through the communication of attributes” . . . , because He is one Person with the Godhead and is also very God. Christ refers to this in Matthew 11:27: “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father,” and in Matthew 28:18: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.” To which “Me”? “To Me, Jesus of Nazareth, Mary’s incarnate Son. I had this from My Father from eternity, before I became man, but when I became man, it was imparted to Me in time according to My human nature, and I kept it concealed until My resurrection and ascent into heaven, when it was to be manifested and glorified. Thus St. Paul declares in Romans 1:4, He was glorified, or “designated Son of

God in power.” John speaks of this as being “glorified” in chapter 7:39.

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord VIII 85

### Hymnody

Hail, Thou once despised Jesus!

Hail, Thou Galilean King!

Thou didst suffer to release us;

Thou didst free salvation bring.

Hail, Thou universal Savior,

Bearer of our sin and shame!

By Thy merit we find favor:

Life is given through Thy name.

—Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus  
(LSB 531:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, You released many from their bondage to sin, death, and the devil as the healer of the nations. But when it came time to release You, the crowd chose a murderer instead. Through our co-crucifixion with You in the waters of our Baptism, may we continually be released from our sins as we confess You to be our everlasting King; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1010)

### Lenten Catechesis:

#### Excommunication and Repentance

The greater excommunication, as the pope calls it, we regard only as a civil penalty, and it does not concern us ministers of the Church. But the lesser, truly Christian excommunication, is this: Open and hard-hearted sinners are not admitted to the Sacrament and other communion of the Church until they amend their lives and

avoid sin [1 Corinthians 5]. Ministers should not mingle secular punishments with this punishment from the Church, or excommunication.

—Smalcald Articles III IX

The New Testament keeps and urges this office *⟨of the Law⟩*, as St. Paul does when he says, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Romans 1:18). Also, “the whole world may be accountable to God. . . . No human being will be justified in His sight” (Romans 3:19–20). And, Christ says, the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin (John 16:8).

This is God’s thunderbolt. By the Law He strikes down both obvious sinners and false saints. He declares no one to be in the right, but drives them all together to terror and despair. This is the hammer. As Jeremiah says, “Is not My word like . . . a hammer that breaks the rock into pieces?” (23:29). This is not active contrition or manufactured repentance. It is passive contrition, true sorrow of heart, suffering, and the sensation of death.

This is what true repentance means. Here a person needs to hear something like this, “You are all of no account, whether you are obvious sinners or saints *⟨in your own opinions⟩*. You have to become different from what you are now. You have to act differently than you are now acting, whether you are as great, wise, powerful, and holy as you can be. Here no one is godly.”

But to this office of the Law, the New Testament immediately adds the consoling promise of grace through the Gospel. . . .

Whenever the Law alone exercises its office, without the Gospel being added, there is nothing but death and hell. . . . On the

other hand, the Gospel brings consolation and forgiveness. It does so . . . through the Word and the Sacraments.

—Smalcald Articles III III 1–4, 7–8

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord IV 6–13

**THURSDAY—LENT 5**

**Psalmody**

<sup>33</sup>For the LORD hears the | needy\*  
and does not despise his own people  
who are | prisoners.

<sup>34</sup>Let heaven and earth | praise him,\*  
the seas and everything  
that | moves in them.

<sup>35</sup>For God will save Zion and build up  
the cities of | Judah,\*  
and people shall dwell there  
and pos- | sess it;

<sup>36</sup>the offspring of his servants shall  
in- | herit it,\*  
and those who love his name  
shall | dwell in it.

—Psalm 69:33–36

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 69, Psalm 32*

**Old Testament Reading: Exodus 4:19–31**

[Moses Returns to Egypt]

<sup>19</sup>And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.” <sup>20</sup>So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

<sup>21</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. <sup>22</sup>Then you shall say to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, <sup>23</sup>and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.’”

<sup>24</sup>At a lodging place on the way the LORD met him and sought to put him to death.

<sup>25</sup>Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son’s foreskin and touched Moses’ feet with it and said, “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!” <sup>26</sup>So he let him alone. It was then that she said, “A bridegroom of blood,” because of the circumcision.

<sup>27</sup>The LORD said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. <sup>28</sup>And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do. <sup>29</sup>Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. <sup>30</sup>Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people.

<sup>31</sup>And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.

**New Testament Reading: Mark 15:16–32**

Jesus Is Mocked

<sup>16</sup>And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. <sup>17</sup>And they clothed him in a

purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. <sup>18</sup>And they began to salute him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” <sup>19</sup>And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. <sup>20</sup>And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.

#### The Crucifixion

<sup>21</sup>And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. <sup>22</sup>And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). <sup>23</sup>And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. <sup>24</sup>And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. <sup>25</sup>And it was the third hour when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup>And the inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” <sup>27</sup>And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>29</sup>And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, <sup>30</sup>save yourself, and come down from the cross!” <sup>31</sup>So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. <sup>32</sup>Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

#### Writing

Concerning the revelation of sin, Moses’ veil hangs [2 Corinthians 3:12–16] before

the eyes of all people as long as they hear the bare preaching of the Law, and nothing about Christ. Therefore, they do not learn from the Law to see their sins correctly. They either become bold hypocrites <who swell with the opinion of their own righteousness> like the Pharisees [Matthew 23], or they despair like Judas [Matthew 27:3–5]. Therefore, Christ takes the Law into His hands and explains it spiritually (Matthew 5:21–48; Romans 7:14). In this way God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all sinners [Romans 1:18], so that they see how great it is. In this way they are directed back to the Law, and then they first learn from it to know their sins correctly—a knowledge that Moses never could have forced out of them.

According to this, the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ, the Son of God, is a serious and terrifying proclamation and declaration of God’s wrath. By such preaching people are first led into the Law correctly—after Moses’ veil has been removed from them. Then they understand correctly for the first time what great things God requires of us in His Law, none of which we can keep. Therefore, they know we are to seek all our righteousness in Christ.

. . . As long as all this (namely, Christ’s suffering and death) proclaims God’s wrath and terrifies a person, it is still not properly the preaching of the Gospel. It remains the preaching of Moses and the Law, and it is, therefore, an alien work of Christ. Passing through this teaching, Christ arrives at His proper office, that is, to preach grace, console, and give life, which is properly the preaching of the Gospel.

—Epitome of the  
Formula of Concord V: 8–10

## Hymnody

And on His thorn-crowned head  
And on His sinless soul  
Our sins in all their guilt were laid  
That He might make us whole.

—O Perfect Life of Love (*LSB* 452:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross. Mercifully grant that we may follow the example of His great humility and patience and be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L28)

## Lenten Catechesis:

### Confession and Absolution

Our churches teach that private Absolution should be retained in the churches, although listing all sins is not necessary for Confession. For, according to the Psalm, it is impossible. “Who can discern his errors?” (Psalm 19:12).

—Augsburg Confession XI

Our churches teach that there is forgiveness of sins for those who have fallen after Baptism whenever they are converted. The Church ought to impart Absolution to those who return to repentance [Jeremiah 3:12]. Now, strictly speaking, repentance consists of two parts. One part is contrition, that is, terrors striking the conscience through the knowledge of sin. The other part is faith, which is born of the Gospel [Romans 10:17] or the Absolution and believes that for

Christ’s sake, sins are forgiven. It comforts the conscience and delivers it from terror. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruit of repentance [Galatians 5:22–23].

—Augsburg Confession XII 1–6

Confession in the churches is not abolished among us. . . . The people are very carefully taught about faith in the Absolution. Before, there was profound silence about faith. Our people are taught that they should highly prize the Absolution as being God’s voice and pronounced by God’s command. The Power of the Keys [Matthew 16:19] is set forth in its beauty. They are reminded what great consolation it brings to anxious consciences and that God requires faith to believe such Absolution as a voice sounding from heaven [e.g., John 12:28–30]. They are taught that such faith in Christ truly obtains and receives the forgiveness of sins.

Our churches teach that naming every sin is not necessary and that consciences should not be burdened with worry about naming every sin. It is impossible to recount all sins. . . . If only sins that can be named are forgiven, consciences could never find peace. For many sins cannot be seen or remembered. The ancient writers also testify that a listing of sins is not necessary.

. . . Because of the great benefit of Absolution, and because it is otherwise useful to the conscience, Confession is retained among us.

—Augsburg Confession XXV 1, 2–5, 7, 9–10, 13

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
IV 14–20

### FRIDAY—LENT 5

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have you  
for- | saken me?\*
- Why are you so far from saving me,  
from the words of my | groaning?
- <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day,  
but you do not | answer,\*  
and by night, but I | find no rest.
- <sup>3</sup> Yet you are | holy,\*  
enthroned on the praises of | Israel.
- <sup>4</sup> In you our fathers | trusted;\*  
they trusted, and you de- | livered them.
- <sup>5</sup> To you they cried and were | rescued,\*  
in you they trusted and were not | put  
to shame.
- Psalm 22:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 22, Psalm 38*

#### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 5:1–6:1

Making Bricks Without Straw

<sup>1</sup>Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’”  
<sup>2</sup>But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”  
<sup>3</sup>Then they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God,

lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.”  
<sup>4</sup>But the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens.”  
<sup>5</sup>And Pharaoh said, “Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!”  
<sup>6</sup>The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen,  
<sup>7</sup>“You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves.”  
<sup>8</sup>But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.’  
<sup>9</sup>Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.”

<sup>10</sup>So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people, “Thus says Pharaoh, ‘I will not give you straw.’  
<sup>11</sup>Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least.’”  
<sup>12</sup>So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw.  
<sup>13</sup>The taskmasters were urgent, saying, “Complete your work, your daily task each day, as when there was straw.”  
<sup>14</sup>And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, “Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?”

<sup>15</sup>Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, “Why do you treat your servants like this?  
<sup>16</sup>No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, ‘Make bricks!’ And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.”

<sup>17</sup>But he said, “You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.’” <sup>18</sup>Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still deliver the same number of bricks.” <sup>19</sup>The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in trouble when they said, “You shall by no means reduce your number of bricks, your daily task each day.” <sup>20</sup>They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, as they came out from Pharaoh; <sup>21</sup>and they said to them, “The LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

<sup>22</sup>Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, “O LORD, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? <sup>23</sup>For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all.”

#### God Promises Deliverance

<sup>6:1</sup>But the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”

### New Testament Reading: Mark 15:33–47

#### The Death of Jesus

<sup>33</sup>And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. <sup>34</sup>And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” <sup>35</sup>And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.” <sup>36</sup>And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put

it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” <sup>37</sup>And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. <sup>38</sup>And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup>And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

<sup>40</sup>There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.

<sup>41</sup>When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

#### Jesus Is Buried

<sup>42</sup>And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, <sup>43</sup>Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the Council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>44</sup>Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. <sup>45</sup>And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. <sup>46</sup>And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. <sup>47</sup>Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.

## Writing

[Faith] justifies because it lays hold of and accepts Christ's merit in the promise of the Holy Gospel. . . . The righteousness that is credited to faith or to the believer out of pure grace is Christ's obedience, suffering, and resurrection, since He has made satisfaction for us to the Law and paid for our sins. Christ is not man alone, but God and man in one undivided person. Therefore, He was hardly subject to the Law (because He is the Lord of the Law), just as He didn't have to suffer and die for His own sake. For this reason, then, His obedience (not only in His suffering and dying, but also because He was voluntarily made under the Law in our place and fulfilled the Law by this obedience) is credited to us for righteousness. So, because of this complete obedience, which He rendered to His heavenly Father for us by doing and suffering and in living and dying, God forgives our sins. He regards us as godly and righteous, and He eternally saves us. This righteousness is brought to us by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and in the Sacraments. It is applied, taken, and received through faith. Therefore, believers have reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, God's grace, sonship, and are heirs of eternal life.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord III 13–16

## Hymnody

O sorrow dread!  
Our God is dead,  
Upon the cross extended.  
There His love enlivened us  
As His life was ended.

—O Darkest Woe (*LSB* 448:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful and everlasting God, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all to bear our sins on the cross. Grant that our hearts may be so fixed with steadfast faith in Him that we fear not the power of sin, death, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L31)

## Lenten Catechesis: Confession and Absolution

Absolution, or the Power of the Keys, is an aid against sin and a consolation for a bad conscience; it is ordained by Christ in the Gospel [Matthew 16:19]. Therefore, Confession and Absolution should by no means be abolished in the Church. This is especially for the sake of timid consciences and untrained young people, so they may be examined and instructed in Christian doctrine.

But the listing of sins should be free to everyone, as to what a person wishes to list or not to list. For as long as we are in the flesh, we will not lie when we say, "I am a poor man, full of sin"; "I see in my members another law"; and such (Romans 7:23). Since private Absolution originates in the Office of the Keys, it should not be despised, but greatly and highly esteemed, along with all other offices of the Christian Church.

We must constantly maintain this point: God does not want to deal with us in any other way than through the spoken Word and the Sacraments. Whatever is praised as from the Spirit—without the Word and Sacraments—is the devil himself. God wanted to appear even to Moses through

the burning bush and spoken Word [Exodus 3:2–15]. No prophet, neither Elijah nor Elisha, received the Spirit without the Ten Commandments (or the spoken Word). John the Baptist was not conceived without the word of Gabriel coming first, nor did he leap in his mother’s womb without Mary’s voice [Luke 1:11–20, 41]. Peter says, “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” [2 Peter 1:21].

—Smalcald Articles III VIII 1–2, 10–13

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord IV 21–32

**SATURDAY—LENT 5**

**Psalmody**

<sup>52</sup>Then he led out his people | like sheep\*  
and guided them in the wilderness | like  
a flock.

<sup>53</sup>He led them in safety, so that  
they were | not afraid,\*  
but the sea overwhelmed their | enemies.

<sup>54</sup>And he brought them to his | holy land,\*  
to the mountain which his right | hand  
had won.

<sup>55</sup>He drove out nations be- | fore them,\*  
he apportioned them for a possession  
and settled the tribes of Israel | in their  
tents.

—Psalm 78:52–55

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 78, Psalm 51*

**Old Testament Reading: Exodus 7:1–25**

Moses and Aaron Before Pharaoh

<sup>1</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. <sup>2</sup>You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. <sup>3</sup>But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, <sup>4</sup>Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. <sup>5</sup>The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.” <sup>6</sup>Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them. <sup>7</sup>Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

<sup>8</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, <sup>9</sup>“When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Prove yourselves by working a miracle,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.’ ” <sup>10</sup>So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. <sup>11</sup>Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. <sup>12</sup>For each man cast down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. <sup>13</sup>Still Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

The First Plague: Water Turned to Blood

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. <sup>15</sup>Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent. <sup>16</sup>And you shall say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, “Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness. But so far, you have not obeyed.”’ <sup>17</sup>Thus says the LORD, “By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. <sup>18</sup>The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.”’” <sup>19</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.’”

<sup>20</sup>Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. <sup>21</sup>And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. <sup>22</sup>But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh’s heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said. <sup>23</sup>Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart.

<sup>24</sup>And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.

<sup>25</sup>Seven full days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.

### New Testament Reading: Mark 16:1–20

The Resurrection

<sup>1</sup>When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. <sup>2</sup>And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup>And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” <sup>4</sup>And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. <sup>5</sup>And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup>And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup>But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” <sup>8</sup>And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

<sup>9</sup>Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. <sup>10</sup>She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. <sup>11</sup>But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

<sup>12</sup>After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. <sup>13</sup>And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

The Great Commission

<sup>14</sup>Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. <sup>16</sup>Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup>And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; <sup>18</sup>they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

<sup>19</sup>So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup>And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.

**Writing**

Since faith alone justifies, it is clear that the inner man cannot be justified, freed, or saved by any outer work or action at all, and that these works, whatever their character, have nothing to do with this inner man. On the other hand, only ungodliness and

unbelief of heart, and no outer work, make him guilty and a damnable servant of sin. Wherefore it ought to be the first concern of every Christian to lay aside all confidence in works and increasingly to strengthen faith alone and through faith to grow in the knowledge, not of works, but of Christ Jesus, who suffered and rose for him, as Peter teaches in the last chapter of his first Epistle (I Pet. 5:10). No other work makes a Christian. Thus when the Jews asked Christ, as related in John 6[:28], what they must do “to be doing the work of God,” he brushed aside the multitude of works which he saw they did in great profusion and suggested one work, saying, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent” [John 6:29]; “for on him has God the Father set his seal” [John 6:27].

Therefore true faith in Christ is a treasure beyond comparison which brings with it complete salvation and saves man from every evil, as Christ says in the last chapter of Mark [16:16]: “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Isaiah contemplated this treasure and foretold it in chapter 10: “The Lord will make a small and consuming word upon the land, and it will overflow with righteousness” [Cf. Isa. 10:22]. This is as though he said, “Faith, which is a small and perfect fulfilment of the law, will fill believers with so great a righteousness that they will need nothing more to become righteous. So Paul says, Rom. 10[:10], “For man believes with his heart and so is justified.”

—Martin Luther

**Hymnody**

With high delight  
 Let us unite  
 In songs of great jubilation.  
 Ye pure in heart,  
 All bear your part,  
 Sing Jesus Christ, our salvation.  
 To set us free  
 Forever, He  
 Is ris'n and sends  
 To all earth's ends  
 Good news to save ev'ry nation.

—With High Delight Let Us Unite  
*(LSB 483:1)*

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, through the resurrection of Your Son You have secured peace for our troubled consciences. Grant us this peace evermore that trusting in the merit of Your Son we may come at last to the perfect peace of heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L39)

**Lenten Catechesis:  
Confession and Absolution**

It is well known that we have made clear and praised the benefit of Absolution and the Power of the Keys. Many troubled consciences have derived comfort from our teaching. They have been comforted after they heard that it is God's command, no, rather, the very voice of the Gospel, that we should believe the Absolution and regard it as certain that the forgiveness of sins is freely granted to us for Christ's sake. We should believe that through this faith we are truly reconciled to God. This belief has encouraged many godly minds and, in the beginning,

brought Luther the highest praise from all good people. This belief shows consciences sure and firm comfort. Previously, the entire power of Absolution had been kept under wraps by teachings about works. . . .

Concerning the time, certainly most people in our churches frequently use the Sacraments (Absolution and the Lord's Supper) during the year. Those who teach about the worth and fruit of the Sacraments speak in a way that invites the people to use the Sacraments frequently. . . . Excommunication is also pronounced against the openly wicked and the haters of the Sacraments. These things are done both according to the Gospel and according to the old canons. A fixed time for Confession is not prescribed because all are not ready in the same way at the same time. Yes, if all were to come at the same time, they could not be heard and instructed in order. . . .

Concerning the enumeration of sins in Confession, people are taught in such a way as not to trap their consciences. It is helpful to familiarize inexperienced people, to name some things, in order that they may be more readily taught. We are now discussing what is necessary according to divine Law. . . . We believe that, according to divine Law, a complete listing of sins is not necessary. . . . However, it is clear that most sins we neither remember nor understand, according to Psalm 19:12, "Who can discern his errors?"

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XI 59–61, 63, 65

**Suggested Reading from  
the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
 IV 33–36

## HOLY WEEK

### PALM SUNDAY

#### Psalmody

- <sup>19</sup>Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high | heavens.\*  
 You who have done great things, O God, who is | like you?
- <sup>20</sup>You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive | me again,\*  
 from the depths of the earth you will bring me | up again.
- <sup>21</sup>You will increase my | greatness\*  
 and comfort | me again.
- <sup>22</sup>I will also praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, | O my God;\*  
 I will sing praises to you with the lyre,  
 O Holy One of | Israel.
- <sup>23</sup>My lips will shout for joy, when I sing prais- | es to you;\*  
 my soul also, which you | have redeemed.
- <sup>24</sup>And my tongue will talk of your righteous help all | the day long,\*  
 for they have been put to shame and disappointed who sought to | do me hurt.  
 —Psalm 71:19–24

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 45, Psalm 130*

#### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 8:1–32

The Second Plague: Frogs

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. <sup>2</sup>But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs. <sup>3</sup>The Nile shall swarm with frogs that shall come up into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed and into the

houses of your servants and your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. <sup>4</sup>The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your servants.”’ <sup>5</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt!’” <sup>6</sup>So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. <sup>7</sup>But the magicians did the same by their secret arts and made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

<sup>8</sup>Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Plead with the LORD to take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.” <sup>9</sup>Moses said to Pharaoh, “Be pleased to command me when I am to plead for you and for your servants and for your people, that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile.” <sup>10</sup>And he said, “Tomorrow.” Moses said, “Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. <sup>11</sup>The frogs shall go away from you and your houses and your servants and your people. They shall be left only in the Nile.” <sup>12</sup>So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD about the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh. <sup>13</sup>And the LORD did according to the word of Moses. The frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields. <sup>14</sup>And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. <sup>15</sup>But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

## The Third Plague: Gnats

<sup>16</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.’” <sup>17</sup>And they did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. <sup>18</sup>The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. <sup>19</sup>Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

## The Fourth Plague: Flies

<sup>20</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Let my people go, that they may serve me.”’ <sup>21</sup>Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. <sup>22</sup>But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. <sup>23</sup>Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.”’” <sup>24</sup>And the LORD did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants’ houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.

<sup>25</sup>Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God

within the land.” <sup>26</sup>But Moses said, “It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the LORD our God are an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? <sup>27</sup>We must go three days’ journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as he tells us.” <sup>28</sup>So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away. Plead for me.” <sup>29</sup>Then Moses said, “Behold, I am going out from you and I will plead with the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.” <sup>30</sup>So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. <sup>31</sup>And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained. <sup>32</sup>But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.

*Additional Reading: Psalm 118*

**New Testament Reading: Hebrews 1:1–14**

## The Supremacy of God’s Son

<sup>1</sup>Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup>He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup>having become as

much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

<sup>5</sup>For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you”?

Or again,

“I will be to him a father,  
and he shall be to me a son”?

<sup>6</sup>And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

<sup>7</sup>Of the angels he says,

“He makes his angels winds,  
and his ministers a flame of fire.”

<sup>8</sup>But of the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,  
the scepter of uprightness is the  
scepter of your kingdom.

<sup>9</sup>You have loved righteousness  
and hated wickedness;  
therefore God, your God,  
has anointed you  
with the oil of gladness  
beyond your companions.”

<sup>10</sup>And,

“You, Lord, laid the foundation  
of the earth in the beginning,  
and the heavens are the work  
of your hands;

<sup>11</sup>they will perish, but you remain;  
they will all wear out like a garment,

<sup>12</sup>like a robe you will roll them up,  
like a garment they will be changed.

But you are the same,  
and your years will have no end.”

<sup>13</sup>And to which of the angels has he ever said,

“Sit at my right hand

until I make your enemies a footstool  
for your feet”?

<sup>14</sup>Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

## Writing

Here [in the Apostles’ Creed] you have the entire divine essence, will, and work shown most completely in quite short and yet rich words. In these words all our wisdom stands, which surpasses and exceeds the wisdom, mind, and reason of all people [1 Corinthians 1:18–25]. The whole world with all diligence has struggled to figure out what God is, what He has in mind and does. Yet the world has never been able to grasp <the knowledge and understanding of any of> these things. But here we have everything in richest measure. For here in all three articles God has revealed Himself and opened the deepest abyss of His fatherly heart and His pure, inexpressible love [Ephesians 3:18–19]. He has created us for this very reason, that He might redeem and sanctify us. In addition to giving and imparting to us everything in heaven and upon earth, He has even given to us His Son and the Holy Spirit, who brings us to Himself [Romans 8:14, 32]. For (as explained above) we could never grasp the knowledge of the Father’s grace and favor except through the Lord Christ. Jesus is a mirror of the fatherly heart [John 14:9; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3], outside of whom we see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge. But we couldn’t know anything about Christ either, unless it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit [1 Corinthians 2:12].

—Large Catechism II 63–65

## Hymnody

All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!  
 Let angels prostrate fall;  
 Bring forth the royal diadem  
 And crown Him Lord of all.  
 Bring forth the royal diadem  
 And crown Him Lord of all.  
 —All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name  
 (LSB 549:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross. Mercifully grant that we may follow the example of His great humility and patience and be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L28)

## Lenten Catechesis: The Sacrament of the Altar

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

—Small Catechism

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
 IV 37–40

## MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Contend, O LORD, with those who  
 con- | tend with me;\*  
 fight against those who fight  
 a- | gainst me!
- <sup>2</sup> Take hold of shield and | buckler\*  
 and rise | for my help!
- <sup>3</sup> Draw the spear and javelin  
 against my pur- | suers!\*  
 Say to my soul, "I am your sal- | vation!"
- <sup>4</sup> Let them be put to shame and dishonor  
 who seek after | my life!\*  
 Let them be turned back  
 and disappointed who devise  
 evil a- | gainst me!
- <sup>5</sup> Let them be like chaff be- | fore the wind,\*  
 with the angel of the LORD  
 driving | them away!
- <sup>6</sup> Let their way be dark and | slippery,\*  
 with the angel of the LORD  
 pur- | suing them!
- <sup>9</sup> Then my soul will rejoice | in the LORD,\*  
 exulting in his sal- | vation.
- <sup>10</sup> All my bones shall say, "O LORD,  
 who is | like you,\*  
 delivering the poor from him  
 who is too strong for him, the poor  
 and needy from him who | robs him?"  
 —Psalm 35:1–6, 9–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 71, Psalm 143*

## Old Testament Reading: Exodus 9:1–28

The Fifth Plague: Egyptian Livestock Die

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. <sup>2</sup>For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, <sup>3</sup>behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock that are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. <sup>4</sup>But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that belongs to the people of Israel shall die.” ’” <sup>5</sup>And the LORD set a time, saying, “Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land.” <sup>6</sup>And the next day the LORD did this thing. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one of the livestock of the people of Israel died. <sup>7</sup>And Pharaoh sent, and behold, not one of the livestock of Israel was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

The Sixth Plague: Boils

<sup>8</sup>And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw them in the air in the sight of Pharaoh. <sup>9</sup>It shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” <sup>10</sup>So they took soot from the kiln and stood before Pharaoh. And Moses threw it in the air, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. <sup>11</sup>And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils came upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians. <sup>12</sup>But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

The Seventh Plague: Hail

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. <sup>14</sup>For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. <sup>15</sup>For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. <sup>16</sup>But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. <sup>17</sup>You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go. <sup>18</sup>Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. <sup>19</sup>Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.” ’” <sup>20</sup>Then whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, <sup>21</sup>but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the LORD left his slaves and his livestock in the field.

<sup>22</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and beast and every plant of the field, in the land of Egypt.” <sup>23</sup>Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. <sup>24</sup>There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail,

very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

<sup>25</sup>The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field. <sup>26</sup>Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail.

<sup>27</sup>Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, “This time I have sinned; the LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. <sup>28</sup>Plead with the LORD, for there has been enough of God’s thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.”

*Additional Reading: Lamentations 1:1–22*

### **New Testament Reading: Hebrews 2:1–18**

Warning Against Neglecting Salvation

<sup>1</sup>Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. <sup>2</sup>For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, <sup>3</sup>how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, <sup>4</sup>while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

The Founder of Salvation

<sup>5</sup>Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. <sup>6</sup>It has been testified somewhere,

“What is man, that you are mindful of him,  
or the son of man,  
that you care for him?”

<sup>7</sup>You made him for a little while lower than the angels;

you have crowned him  
with glory and honor,

<sup>8</sup>putting everything in subjection under his feet.”

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. <sup>9</sup>But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

<sup>10</sup>For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

<sup>11</sup>For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, <sup>12</sup>saying,

“I will tell of your name to my brothers;  
in the midst of the congregation  
I will sing your praise.”

<sup>13</sup>And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Behold, I and the children  
God has given me.”

<sup>14</sup>Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup>and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. <sup>16</sup>For surely it is not angels

that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. <sup>17</sup>Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup>For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

**Writing**

And it is the sweetest comfort that sin, which made its habitation in human flesh, was condemned in the same human flesh, in the person of Christ. Our body is the body of death, but in that same body of ours which the Son of God assumed from us, death was again destroyed. Although our sins have separated us very far from God (Is. 59:2), so that we have been alienated from the grace, righteousness, and life of God (Eph. 2:12), yet the Son of God has brought very close to us those heavenly blessings which had been removed far from us (Eph. 2:13–19), laying them before us through His incarnation in the flesh which is of the same substance with our own, so that of His fullness we have received grace for grace (John 1:16). This is the most comforting and salutary exchange, that the Son of God has received from us a human nature and sanctified and blessed and exalted and glorified it in His own person.

Moreover, in His Holy Supper He joins Himself to us in that flesh, so that we may be strengthened by this most certain pledge of the salvation and glorification of our nature; for He does not blush to call us brothers. Therefore, because we are such, He also joins Himself to us in that flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14). Flesh brought death into this world and, again, the flesh of the Son of Man was

given for the life of the world in order that he who eats the flesh of Christ may have eternal life. (John 6:54)

—Martin Chemnitz

**Hymnody**

Worship, honor, pow’r, and blessing  
 Thou art worthy to receive;  
 Highest praises, without ceasing,  
 Right it is for us to give.  
 Help, ye bright angelic spirits,  
 All your noblest anthems raise;  
 Help to sing our Savior’s merits,  
 Help to chant Immanuel’s praise!

—Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus  
 (LSB 531:4)

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, grant that in the midst of our failures and weaknesses we may be restored through the passion and intercession of Your only-begotten Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L29)

**Lenten Catechesis:**

**What is the Sacrament of the Altar?**

“Now, what is the Sacrament of the Altar?”

Answer, “It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in and under the bread and wine, which we Christians are commanded by Christ’s Word to eat and to drink.” . . . We say that though the Sacrament is bread and wine, it is not mere bread and wine, such as are ordinarily served at the table [1 Corinthians 10:16–17]. But this is bread and wine included in, and connected with, God’s Word.

It is the Word, I say, that makes and sets this Sacrament apart. So it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is called, Christ's body and blood [1 Corinthians 11:23–27]. . . . It is not the word or ordinance of a prince or emperor. But it is the Word of the grand Majesty, at whose feet all creatures should fall and affirm it is as He says, and accept it with all reverence, fear, and humility [Isaiah 45:23; Philippians 2:10].

It is true, indeed, that if you take away the Word or regard the Sacrament without the words, you have nothing but mere bread and wine. But if the words remain with them, as they shall and must, then, by virtue of the words, it is truly Christ's body and blood. What Christ's lips say and speak, so it is. He can never lie or deceive [Titus 1:2].

The Word by which it became a Sacrament and was instituted does not become false because of the person or his unbelief. For Christ does not say, "If you believe or are worthy, you receive My body and blood." No, He says, "Take, eat and drink; this is My body and blood." . . . "No matter whether you are worthy or unworthy, you have here His body and blood by virtue of these words that are added to the bread and wine." Note and remember this well. For upon these words rest all our foundation, protection, and defense against all errors and deception that have ever come or may yet come.

—Large Catechism V 8–11, 13–14,  
17–19

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
V 1–6

## TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

### Psalmody

<sup>3</sup>For my soul is full of | troubles,\*  
and my life draws near | to Sheol.

<sup>4</sup>I am counted among those who  
go down | to the pit;\*  
I am a man who | has no strength,

<sup>5</sup>like one set loose among the dead,  
like the slain that lie | in the grave,\*  
like those whom you remember no more,  
for they are cut off | from your hand.

<sup>6</sup>You have put me in the depths | of the pit,\*  
in the regions | dark and deep.

<sup>7</sup>Your wrath lies heavy up- | on me,\*  
and you overwhelm me  
with | all your waves.

<sup>8</sup>You have caused my companions  
to | shun me;\*  
you have made me a hor- | ror to them.

I am shut in so that I cannot escape;

<sup>9</sup>my eye grows dim through | sorrow.\*  
Every day I call upon you, O LORD;  
I spread out my | hands to you.

—Psalm 88:3–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 77, Psalm 6*

### Old Testament Reading:

#### Exodus 9:29–10:20

[The Seventh Plague: Hail]

<sup>29</sup>Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the LORD. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the LORD's. <sup>30</sup>But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God." <sup>31</sup>(The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. <sup>32</sup>But the wheat and the emmer were not

struck down, for they are late in coming up.)  
<sup>33</sup>So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and stretched out his hands to the LORD, and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured upon the earth. <sup>34</sup>But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. <sup>35</sup>So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

The Eighth Plague: Locusts

<sup>10:1</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, <sup>2</sup>and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.”

<sup>3</sup>So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. <sup>4</sup>For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, <sup>5</sup>and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land. And they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours that grows in the field, <sup>6</sup>and they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.’ ” Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

<sup>7</sup>Then Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How long shall this man be a snare to us?

Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?” <sup>8</sup>So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. And he said to them, “Go, serve the LORD your God. But which ones are to go?” <sup>9</sup>Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old. We will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the LORD.” <sup>10</sup>But he said to them, “The LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind. <sup>11</sup>No! Go, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you are asking.” And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence.

<sup>12</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left.” <sup>13</sup>So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts. <sup>14</sup>The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever will be again. <sup>15</sup>They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt. <sup>16</sup>Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. <sup>17</sup>Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the LORD your God only to remove this death from me.” <sup>18</sup>So he

went out from Pharaoh and pleaded with the LORD. <sup>19</sup>And the LORD turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. <sup>20</sup>But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go.

*Additional Reading: Lamentations 2:1–22*

### **New Testament Reading: Hebrews 3:1–19**

Jesus Greater Than Moses

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, <sup>2</sup>who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. <sup>3</sup>For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. <sup>4</sup>(For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) <sup>5</sup>Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, <sup>6</sup>but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

A Rest for the People of God

<sup>7</sup>Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,

“Today, if you hear his voice,

<sup>8</sup>do not harden your hearts  
as in the rebellion,

on the day of testing  
in the wilderness,

<sup>9</sup>where your fathers put me to the test  
and saw my works for forty years.

<sup>10</sup>Therefore I was provoked  
with that generation,

and said, “They always go astray  
in their heart;

they have not known my ways.’

<sup>11</sup>As I swore in my wrath,

“They shall not enter my rest.’”

<sup>12</sup>Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup>For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. <sup>15</sup>As it is said,

“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts  
as in the rebellion.”

<sup>16</sup>For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? <sup>17</sup>And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup>And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? <sup>19</sup>So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

### **Writing**

There are certain rites or ceremonies in the Church and, although salvation does not depend on them principally, yet salvation is increased from them according as devotion is exercised. Although all these cannot be enumerated at present, nevertheless we should not omit certain ones as examples of all. So of these rites or ceremonies, some consist of such things as the water of aspersion, the reception of ashes, the blessing of branches and of candles, and other such

things. Now others consist of deeds such as the sign of the cross, the blowing of exorcization, the spreading of the hands, the bending of the knees, and other acts of this kind. Others consist of words, like the invocation of the Trinity and whatever else is done in this manner. Now all these things are sanctified by the word of God, whether they are sanctified through the utterance of words by invoking divine power or receive the effect of sanctification through the same divine power by the exhibiting of faith alone. For where there is true faith, the word of God cannot be lacking, since the word itself is conceived by faith and operates through faith. . . . Custom also has it that, on Palm Sunday . . . the branches of palms and the foliage of trees be blessed and distributed to the people, to carry as those did, who while singing and praising with branches of palms and flourishing foliage of trees met the Lord Jesus on the same days as He went to Jerusalem. Thus not only is it proposed that this must be done by us corporeally as they did it corporeally, but rather this is signified, that either in that or in this corporeal deed there must be spiritual imitation. For the palm is the sign of victory but the flourishing branches signify good works. So then we meet Christ in an act of praise with branches of palms and foliage, when we praise Him with good works and with action worthy of graces as the triumpher over death.

—Hugh of Saint Victor

## Hymnody

You are the great High Priest;  
 You have prepared the feast  
 Of holy love;  
 And in our mortal pain  
 None calls on You in vain;  
 Our plea do not disdain;  
 Help from above.

—Shepherd of Tender Youth  
 (LSB 864:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, grant us by Your grace so to pass through this holy time of our Lord’s passion that we may obtain the forgiveness of our sins; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L30)

## Lenten Catechesis: What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?

What we should seek and gain [in this Sacrament] . . . is plain and clear from the words just mentioned, “This is My body and blood, given and shed *for you* for the forgiveness of sins.” . . . For this reason we go to the Sacrament: there we receive such a treasure by and in which we gain forgiveness of sins.” . . . “The words stand here and give us this. Therefore, Christ asks me to eat and drink, so that this treasure may be my own and may benefit me as a sure pledge and token. In fact, it is the very same treasure that is appointed for me against my sins, death, and every disaster.”

On this account it is indeed called a food of souls, which nourishes and strengthens the new man. For by Baptism we are first born anew [John 3:5]. But, as we said before,

there still remains the old vicious nature of flesh and blood in mankind. There are so many hindrances and temptations of the devil and of the world that we often become weary and faint, and sometimes we also stumble [Hebrews 12:3].

Therefore, the Sacrament is given as a daily pasture and sustenance, that faith may refresh and strengthen itself [Psalm 23:1–3] so that it will not fall back in such a battle, but become ever stronger and stronger. The new life must be guided so that it continually increases and progresses. But it must suffer much opposition. For the devil is such a furious enemy. When he sees that we oppose him and attack the old man, and that he cannot topple us over by force, he prowls and moves about on all sides [1 Peter 5:8]. He tries every trick and does not stop until he finally wears us out, so that we either renounce our faith or throw up our hands and put up our feet, becoming indifferent or impatient. Now to this purpose the comfort of the Sacrament is given when the heart feels that the burden is becoming too heavy, so that it may gain here new power and refreshment.

—Large Catechism V 20–27

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
V 7–10

## WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

### Psalmody

- <sup>20</sup> I have found David, my | servant;\*  
with my holy oil I have a- | nointed him,  
<sup>21</sup> so that my hand shall be estab- | lished  
with him;\*  
my arm also shall | strengthen him.  
<sup>22</sup> The enemy shall not out- | wit him;\*  
the wicked shall not | humble him.  
<sup>23</sup> I will crush his foes be- | fore him\*  
and strike down those who | hate him.  
<sup>24</sup> My faithfulness and my steadfast  
love shall | be with him,\*  
and in my name shall his horn  
be ex- | alted.  
<sup>25</sup> I will set his hand | on the sea\*  
and his right hand on the | rivers.  
<sup>26</sup> He shall cry to me, ‘You are my | Father,\*  
my God, and the Rock of  
my sal- | vation.’  
<sup>27</sup> And I will make him the | firstborn,\*  
the highest of the kings | of the earth.  
—Psalm 89:20–27

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 89, Psalm 32*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 10:21–11:10

The Ninth Plague: Darkness

<sup>21</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.” <sup>22</sup>So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. <sup>23</sup>They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived. <sup>24</sup>Then Pharaoh called Moses and

said, “Go, serve the LORD; your little ones also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind.”<sup>25</sup> But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.”<sup>26</sup> Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the LORD our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there.”<sup>27</sup> But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go.<sup>28</sup> Then Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die.”<sup>29</sup> Moses said, “As you say! I will not see your face again.”

A Final Plague Threatened

<sup>11:1</sup>The LORD said to Moses, “Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely.<sup>2</sup> Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry.”<sup>3</sup> And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people.

<sup>4</sup>So Moses said, “Thus says the LORD: About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt,<sup>5</sup> and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle.<sup>6</sup> There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again.<sup>7</sup> But not a dog shall

growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.<sup>8</sup> And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, you and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.” And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.”

<sup>10</sup>Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

*Additional Reading: Lamentations 3:1–66*

**New Testament Reading: Hebrews 4:1–16**

[A Rest for the People of God]

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

<sup>2</sup>For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.<sup>3</sup> For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,

“As I swore in my wrath,  
‘They shall not enter my rest,’ ”

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.<sup>4</sup> For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.”<sup>5</sup> And again in this passage he said,

“They shall not enter my rest.”

<sup>6</sup>Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good

news failed to enter because of disobedience, <sup>7</sup>again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts.”

<sup>8</sup>For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. <sup>9</sup>So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, <sup>10</sup>for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

<sup>11</sup>Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. <sup>12</sup>For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup>And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Jesus the Great High Priest

<sup>14</sup>Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

## Writing

Such hard heads imagine that God overlooks and allows them to rest in security, or that He is entirely ignorant or cares nothing about such matters. Therefore, God

must deal a smashing blow and punish them, so that He cannot forget their sin unto their children’s children. In that way, everyone may take note and see that this is no joke to Him. These are the people He means when He says, “those who hate Me” [Exodus 20:5]; i.e., those who persist in their defiance and pride. Whatever is preached or said to them, they will not listen. When they are rebuked, in order that they may learn to know themselves and make amends before the punishment begins, they become mad and foolish. They rightly deserve wrath, as we see daily in bishops and princes now.

But as terrible as these threatenings are, so much more powerful is the consolation in the promise. For those who cling to God alone should be sure that He will show them mercy. In other words, He will show them pure goodness and blessing, not only for themselves, but also to their children and their children’s children, even to the thousandth generation and beyond that. This ought certainly to move and impel us to risk our hearts in all confidence with God [Hebrews 4:16; 10:19–23], if we wish all temporal and eternal good. For the supreme Majesty makes such outstanding offers and presents such heartfelt encouragements and such rich promises.

—Large Catechism I 37–40

## Hymnody

Lord Jesus, think on me,  
By anxious thoughts oppressed;  
Let me Your loving servant be  
And taste Your promised rest.

—Lord Jesus, Think on Me (*LSB* 610:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful and everlasting God, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all to bear our sins on the cross. Grant that our hearts may be so fixed with steadfast faith in Him that we fear not the power of sin, death, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L31)

## Lenten Catechesis: How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things? / Who receives the power and benefit of this Sacrament?

We speak about the bread and wine that is Christ's body and blood and has the words attached to it. That, we say, is truly the treasure—and nothing else—through which such forgiveness is gained. Now the only way this treasure is passed along and made our very own is in the words "Given . . . and shed for you." For in the words you have both truths, that it is Christ's body and blood, and that it is yours as a treasure and gift.

Although the work is done and the forgiveness of sins is secured by the cross [John 19:30], it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word. How would we know about it otherwise, that such a thing was accomplished or was to be given to us, unless it were presented by preaching or the oral Word [Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 1:21]? . . . But now the entire Gospel and the article of the Creed—I believe in . . . the holy Christian Church, . . . the forgiveness of sins, and so on—are embodied by the Word in this Sacrament and presented to us. . . . [The fanatics] cannot say that these words in the Sacrament are of no use, just as

they dare not say that the entire Gospel or God's Word, apart from the Sacrament, is of no use.

—Large Catechism V 28–29, 31–32

Whoever believes the words has what they declare and bring. . . . Because [Christ] offers and promises forgiveness of sin, it cannot be received except by faith. This faith He Himself demands in the Word when He says, "Given . . . and shed for you," as if He said, "For this reason I give it, and ask you to eat and drink it, that you may claim it as yours and enjoy it." Whoever now accepts these words and believes that what they declare is true has forgiveness.

—Large Catechism V 33–35

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord V 11–15

## HOLY (MAUNDY) THURSDAY

Propers for Maundy Thursday for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Fret not yourself because of evil- | doers;\*  
be not envious of wrong- | doers!
- <sup>2</sup> For they will soon fade | like the grass\*  
and wither like the | green herb.
- <sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, | and do good;\*  
dwell in the land and  
befriend | faithfulness.
- <sup>4</sup> Delight yourself | in the LORD,\*  
and he will give you  
the desires | of your heart.

<sup>5</sup>Commit your way | to the LORD;\*  
trust in him, and | he will act.  
<sup>6</sup>He will bring forth your righteousness | as  
the light,\*  
and your justice as the | noonday.  
<sup>7</sup>Be still before the LORD and wait  
patiently | for him;\*  
fret not yourself over the one who  
prosper in his way, over the man  
who carries out evil de- | vices!  
—Psalm 37:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 110, Psalm 38*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 12:1–28

The Passover

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, <sup>2</sup>“This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. <sup>3</sup>Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. <sup>4</sup>And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. <sup>5</sup>Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, <sup>6</sup>and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.  
<sup>7</sup>“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. <sup>8</sup>They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. <sup>9</sup>Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs

and its inner parts. <sup>10</sup>And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. <sup>11</sup>In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover. <sup>12</sup>For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup>The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

<sup>14</sup>“This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. <sup>15</sup>Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. <sup>16</sup>On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. <sup>17</sup>And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. <sup>18</sup>In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. <sup>19</sup>For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from

the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. <sup>20</sup>You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread.”

<sup>21</sup>Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. <sup>22</sup>Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. <sup>23</sup>For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. <sup>24</sup>You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. <sup>25</sup>And when you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. <sup>26</sup>And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ <sup>27</sup>you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

<sup>28</sup>Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

*Additional Reading: Lamentations 4:1–22*

### **New Testament Reading: Hebrews 5:1–14**

[Jesus the Great High Priest]

<sup>1</sup>For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. <sup>2</sup>He can deal gently with

the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. <sup>3</sup>Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. <sup>4</sup>And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

<sup>5</sup>So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

“You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you”;

<sup>6</sup>as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,  
after the order of Melchizedek.”

<sup>7</sup>In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. <sup>8</sup>Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. <sup>9</sup>And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, <sup>10</sup>being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Warning Against Apostasy

<sup>11</sup>About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. <sup>12</sup>For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, <sup>13</sup>for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. <sup>14</sup>But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

*Additional Reading: Psalm 31*

## Writing

The apostle [Paul] wishes to say: Consider, beloved Christians, that when you receive the blessed cup and the blessed bread, each one partakes of the body and blood of Christ; they are both common to all of you. You come into body-and-blood fellowship with one another. For just as many grains become one bread, so in the Holy Supper, you, though you are many, become one Body, one mass, because you are partakers of the one bread and with it one and the same body and blood of Christ.

Because of the presence and participation of the body of Christ, the Holy Supper is a meal of the most intimate fellowship and, therefore, at the same time, the highest love-meal. Just as fervent love is demanded, so fervent love is delivered. We all come together, as children of the same family, to the table of our common, heavenly Father. As great as the distinction between communicants in civic life may be, in the Holy Supper all distinctions evaporate. We are all the same, in that we each eat the same earthly and heavenly bread and drink the same earthly and heavenly drink. In this Meal, the subject and his king, the slave and his master, the beggar and the rich, the child and the old man, the wife and the husband, the simple and the learned, truly all communicants stand as the same poor sinners and beggars, hungry and thirsty for grace. Although one may appear in a rough apron while another in velvet and satin, adorned with gold and pearls, when they depart, all take with them that for which they hunger and thirst: Christ's blood and righteousness as their beauty and glorious dress. No one receives a better food and better drink than the other. All receive the same Jesus, and with Him, the same righteousness.

—C. F. W. Walther

## Hymnody

Jesus, hail! Enthroned in glory,  
There forever to abide;  
All the heav'nly hosts adore Thee,  
Seated at Thy Father's side.  
There for sinners Thou art pleading;  
There Thou dost our place prepare,  
Ever for us interceding  
Till in glory we appear.

—Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus  
(*LSB* 531:3)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L32)

## Lenten Catechesis:

### Who receives this Sacrament worthily?

Since [the] treasure [of this Sacrament] is entirely presented in the words, it cannot be received and made ours in any other way than with the heart. . . . Fasting, prayer, and other such things may indeed be outward preparations and discipline for children, so that the body may keep and bring itself modestly and reverently to receive Christ's body and blood. Yet the body cannot seize and make its own what is given in and with the Sacrament. This is done by the faith in the heart, which discerns this treasure and desires it.

—Large Catechism V 36–37

[Having] the true understanding and doctrine of the Sacrament, there is also need for some admonition and encouragement. Then people may not let such a great treasure—daily administered and distributed among Christians—pass by unnoticed. . . . For we see that people seem weary and lazy about receiving the Sacrament. . . . They act as though they were such strong Christians that they have no need of it. . . . Some pretend that it is a matter of liberty and not necessary. They pretend that it is enough to believe without it. For the most part, they go so far astray that they become quite brutish and finally despise both the Sacrament and God’s Word.

. . . No one should by any means be forced or compelled to go to the Sacrament, lest we institute a new murdering of souls. Nevertheless, it must be known that people who deprive themselves of and withdraw from the Sacrament for such a long time are not to be considered Christians. For Christ . . . has commanded His Christians to eat it, drink it, and remember Him by it.

Indeed, those who are true Christians and value the Sacrament precious and holy will drive and move themselves to go to it. . . . There is also need for daily encouragement, [and] . . . there is need for us to continue to preach so that people may not become weary and disgusted. For we know and feel how the devil always opposes this and every Christian exercise. He drives and deters people from them as much as he can.

—Large Catechism V 39–44

### **Maundy Thursday**

Maundy Thursday, the Day of Commandment (*Dies Mandati*), most properly refers to the example of service

given us by our Lord and the directive to love as we have been loved (John 13:34). Yet we must not forget the command given in the Words of Our Lord to “do this in remembrance of Me.” This day, with its commemoration of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, is set off from the rest of Holy Week as a day of festive joy.

### **Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord V 16–22

## **GOOD FRIDAY**

Propers for Good Friday for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.

### **Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise the name | of the LORD,\*  
give praise, O servants | of the LORD,
- <sup>2</sup> who stand in the house | of the LORD,\*  
in the courts of the house | of our God!
- <sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD, for the | LORD is good;\*  
sing to his name, for it is | pleasant!
- <sup>4</sup> For the LORD has chosen Jacob | for himself,\*  
Israel as his own pos- | session.
- <sup>8</sup> He it was who struck down the firstborn  
of | Egypt,\*  
both of man | and of beast;
- <sup>9</sup> who in your midst, O | Egypt,\*  
sent signs and wonders against Pharaoh  
and all his | servants;  
—Psalm 135:1–4, 8–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 136, Psalm 51*

## Old Testament Reading: Exodus 12:29–32; 13:1–16

The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn

<sup>29</sup>At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. <sup>30</sup>And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. <sup>31</sup>Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, “Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. <sup>32</sup>Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!” . . .

Consecration of the Firstborn

<sup>13:1</sup>The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.”

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

<sup>3</sup>Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. <sup>4</sup>Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. <sup>5</sup>And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. <sup>6</sup>Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. <sup>8</sup>You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ <sup>9</sup>And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. <sup>10</sup>You shall therefore keep this statute at its appointed time from year to year.

<sup>11</sup>“When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, <sup>12</sup>you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD’s. <sup>13</sup>Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. <sup>14</sup>And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. <sup>15</sup>For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ <sup>16</sup>It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.”

*Additional Reading: Lamentations 5:1–22*

**New Testament Reading: Hebrews 6:1–20**

[Warning Against Apostasy]

<sup>1</sup>Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, <sup>2</sup>and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup>And this we will do if God permits. <sup>4</sup>For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup>and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, <sup>6</sup>and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. <sup>7</sup>For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. <sup>8</sup>But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

<sup>9</sup>Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. <sup>10</sup>For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. <sup>11</sup>And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup>so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The Certainty of God’s Promise

<sup>13</sup>For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, <sup>14</sup>saying,

“Surely I will bless you and multiply you.”

<sup>15</sup>And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. <sup>16</sup>For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. <sup>17</sup>So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, <sup>18</sup>so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. <sup>19</sup>We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, <sup>20</sup>where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

*Additional Reading: Psalm 22*

**Writing**

But if any honest Christian wants to know why the Lord suffered death on the cross and not in some other way, we answer thus: in no other way was it expedient for us, indeed the Lord offered for our sakes the one death that was supremely good. He had come to bear the curse that lay on us; and how could He “become a curse” otherwise than by accepting the accursed death? And that death is the cross, for it is written “Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.” Again, the death of the Lord is the ransom of all, and by it “the middle wall of partition” is broken down and the call of the Gentiles comes about. How could He have called us if He had not been crucified, for it is only on the cross that a man dies with arms outstretched? Here, again, we see the fitness of His death

and of those outstretched arms: it was that He might draw His ancient people with the one and the Gentiles with the other, and join both together in Himself. Even so, He foretold the manner of His redeeming death, “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Myself.”

—Athanasius

### Hymnody

He by Himself has sworn;  
I on His oath depend.  
I shall, on eagle wings upborne,  
To heav’n ascend.  
I shall behold His face;  
I shall His pow’r adore  
And sing the wonders of His grace  
Forevermore.

—The God of Abraham Praise  
(LSB 798:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, graciously behold this Your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and delivered into the hands of sinful men to suffer death upon the cross; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L33)

### Lenten Catechesis: Admonition and Encouragement Regarding the Sacrament

“Do this in remembrance of Me” [Luke 22:19]. These are inviting and commanding words by which all who would be Christians are told to partake of this Sacrament. Therefore, whoever wants to be Christ’s disciple, with whom He here speaks, must

also consider and keep this Sacrament. They should not act from compulsion, being forced by others, but in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, to please Him. . . . Since He speaks the words, “As often as you drink it,” it is . . . implied that we should do it often. . . . He wants to have the Sacrament free. He does not limit it to special times . . . not only once a year, just upon this evening, but often, when and where you will, according to everyone’s opportunity and necessity, bound to no place or appointed time.

It is not left free in the sense that we may despise it. I call that despising the Sacrament if one allows a long time to elapse—with nothing to hinder him—yet never feels a desire for it. If you want such freedom, you may just as well have the freedom to not be a Christian and not have to believe or pray. One is just as much commanded by Christ as the other. But if you want to be a Christian, you must from time to time fulfill and obey this commandment. For this commandment ought always to move you to examine yourself [1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5] and to think, “See, what sort of a Christian I am! If I were one, I would certainly have some small longing for what my Lord has commanded me to do.”

We neither force nor compel anyone. Nor does anyone have to do it to serve or please us. This should lead and constrain you by itself, that the Lord desires it and that it is pleasing to Him. . . . We are doing no more than talking about and encouraging you about what you ought to do . . . . The Lord invites and allures you. If you despise it, you must answer for that yourself [2 Corinthians 5:10].

—Large Catechism V 45, 47, 49–50, 52

## Good Friday

Good Friday is the high point of Holy Week, but not of the Church Year—for we know that after Good Friday a day is coming when death will give way to life. If the commemoration of Good Friday was separated from Easter, we would remain in our sins, and thus the ultimate word of Good Friday would be “you are condemned.” Even as we stand at the foot of the cross and contemplate the price of our sin, we gather as children reconciled to God. In the services of Good Friday, the Church does not leave us in the darkness and the shadow of death but rather fills us with the certainty of victory over sin, death, and the devil, pointing us to the final victory that will be celebrated on Easter.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord V 23–27

## HOLY SATURDAY

Propers for Holy Saturday for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Fret not yourself because of evil- | doers;\*  
be not envious of wrong- | doers!  
<sup>2</sup> For they will soon fade | like the grass\*  
and wither like the | green herb.  
<sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, | and do good;\*  
dwell in the land and  
befriend | faithfulness.

<sup>4</sup> Delight yourself | in the LORD,\*  
and he will give you the desires | of your  
heart.

<sup>5</sup> Commit your way | to the LORD;\*  
trust in him, and | he will act.

<sup>6</sup> He will bring forth your righteousness | as  
the light,\*  
and your justice as the | noonday.

<sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD and wait  
patiently | for him;\*  
fret not yourself over the one who  
prosper in his way, over the man who  
carries out evil de- | vices!

—Psalm 37:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 76, Psalm 102*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 13:17–14:9

Pillars of Cloud and Fire

<sup>17</sup>When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.”

<sup>18</sup>But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle. <sup>19</sup>Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here.” <sup>20</sup>And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. <sup>22</sup>The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

## Crossing the Red Sea

<sup>14:1</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. <sup>3</sup>For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, “They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.” <sup>4</sup>And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.

<sup>5</sup>When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, “What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” <sup>6</sup>So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, <sup>7</sup>and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. <sup>9</sup>The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

**New Testament Reading: Hebrews 7:1–22**

## The Priestly Order of Melchizedek

<sup>1</sup>For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, <sup>2</sup>and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. <sup>3</sup>He is without

father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

<sup>4</sup>See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! <sup>5</sup>And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. <sup>6</sup>But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. <sup>7</sup>It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. <sup>8</sup>In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. <sup>9</sup>One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, <sup>10</sup>for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

## Jesus Compared to Melchizedek

<sup>11</sup>Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? <sup>12</sup>For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. <sup>13</sup>For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. <sup>14</sup>For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

<sup>15</sup>This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, <sup>16</sup>who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. <sup>17</sup>For it is witnessed of him,

“You are a priest forever,  
after the order of Melchizedek.”

<sup>18</sup>For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness <sup>19</sup>(for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

<sup>20</sup>And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, <sup>21</sup>but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him:

“The Lord has sworn  
and will not change his mind,  
“You are a priest forever.”

<sup>22</sup>This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

## Writing

They sealed You up within the tomb, and set guards, that Your resurrection might be believed among those who deny You. It was for You that they sealed the tomb and set guards, O Son of the Living One! If they had neglected You and left You and gone after they buried You, there would have been room to lie and say that the disciples stole You. O Quickener of all! When they craftily sealed Your tomb, they made Your glory greater.

Daniel was a type of You, so also Lazarus; one in the den, which the Gentiles

sealed up, and one in the tomb, which the people opened. . . .

If they had left Your tomb open, their mouth [could have remained] open. But they went away because they had shut Your tomb and sealed it and closed their own mouths. Yea, they closed it, and when they had senselessly covered Your tomb, all the slanderers covered their own heads.

But in Your resurrection You persuade men concerning Your birth. You were pure in the womb that was sealed and alive in the tomb that was sealed. The womb and the tomb, being sealed, were witnesses to You [and to Your divinity].

The belly and hell cried aloud of Your birth and Your resurrection: The belly, which was sealed, conceived You. Hell, which was closed up, brought You forth. Nature did not cause either the belly to conceive You or hell to give You up! . . . Thus do they proclaim that You are of heaven.

Sealed was the tomb to which they had entrusted You, that it might keep You dead, that is, safe, and virgin was the womb, which no man knew. Virgin womb and sealed tomb, like trumpets, proclaimed Him in the ears of a deaf people.

—Ephraim Syrus

## Hymnody

Christ was that priest God swore,  
Uniquely First and Last,  
Who would in righteousness and love  
Be unsurpassed:

“A priest forevermore,”  
An oath God would not break,  
“A priest within the order of  
Melchizedek.”

—Christ Sits at God’s Right Hand  
(LSB 564:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You made this most holy night to shine with the glory of the Lord's resurrection. Preserve in us the spirit of adoption which You have given so that, made alive in body and soul, we may serve You purely; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (466)

## Lenten Catechesis: Admonition and Encouragement Regarding the Sacrament

Those who are mindful of their weakness desire to be rid of it and long for help. They should regard and use the Sacrament just like a precious antidote against the poison that they have in them. Here in the Sacrament you are to receive from the lips of Christ forgiveness of sin. It contains and brings with it God's grace and the Spirit with all His gifts, protection, shelter, and power against death and the devil and all misfortune.

. . . You have your own distress, which is around your neck. Because of your distress, this command, invitation, and promise are given. This ought to move you. For Christ Himself says, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" [Matthew 9:12]. In other words, He means those who are weary and heavy-laden with their sins, with the fear of death, temptations of the flesh, and of the devil. If, therefore, you are heavy laden and feel your weakness, then go joyfully to this Sacrament and receive refreshment, comfort, and strength [Matthew 11:28].

—Large Catechism V 70–72

1. We believe, teach, and confess that in the Holy Supper Christ's body and blood are

truly and essentially present, and that they are truly distributed and received with the bread and wine.

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the words of Christ's testament are not to be understood in any other way than the way they read, according to the letter. . . . Because of the sacramental union, «the bread and wine» are truly Christ's body and blood.

10. We believe, teach, and confess that all the worthiness of guests of this heavenly feast is and is founded on Christ's most holy obedience and perfect merit alone. We receive these for ourselves by true faith, and by the Sacrament we are assured of them. Our worthiness is not at all in our virtues or inward and outward preparations.

—Epitome of the  
Formula of Concord VII

## Holy Saturday

The commemoration of Holy Saturday encompasses our Lord's rest in the tomb and His descent into hell. The descent into hell is not, however, the depth of Christ's humiliation but rather the demonstration of His complete victory over death. This day takes us out of the depths of most painful sorrow and out of the solitude of holy meditation upon Christ's Passion to the celebration of victory as we anticipate the Lord's resurrection breaking forth in all its glory on Easter.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VI 1–6

## EASTER SEASON

*Proper for Easter and the Easter Season for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.*

### THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD—EASTER SUNDAY

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Oh sing to the LORD a | new song;\*  
sing to the LORD, | all the earth!
- <sup>2</sup> Sing to the LORD, | bless his name;\*  
tell of his salvation from | day to day.
- <sup>3</sup> Declare his glory among the | nations,\*  
his marvelous works among  
all the | peoples!
- <sup>6</sup> Splendor and majesty are be- | fore him;\*  
strength and beauty are in his  
sanctu- | ary.
- <sup>11</sup> Let the heavens be glad,  
and let the | earth rejoice;\*  
let the sea roar, and all that fills it; <sup>12</sup> let  
the field exult, and every- | thing in it!
- Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for  
joy <sup>13</sup> before the LORD, | for he comes,\*  
for he comes to | judge the earth.
- He will judge the world in | righteousness,\*  
and the peoples in his | faithfulness.
- Psalm 96:1–3, 6, 11–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 107*

#### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 14:10–31

[Crossing the Red Sea]

<sup>10</sup>When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. <sup>11</sup>They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt

that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? <sup>12</sup>Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?’ For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” <sup>13</sup>And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. <sup>14</sup>The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

<sup>15</sup>The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. <sup>16</sup>Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. <sup>17</sup>And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. <sup>18</sup>And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

<sup>19</sup>Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, <sup>20</sup>coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

<sup>21</sup>Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea

dry land, and the waters were divided. <sup>22</sup>And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

<sup>23</sup>The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

<sup>24</sup>And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, <sup>25</sup>clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

<sup>26</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen."

<sup>27</sup>So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. <sup>28</sup>The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. <sup>29</sup>But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

<sup>30</sup>Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

<sup>31</sup>Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

## New Testament Reading: Hebrews 7:23–8:13

[The Priestly Order of Mechizedek]

<sup>23</sup>The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, <sup>24</sup>but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. <sup>25</sup>Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

<sup>26</sup>For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. <sup>27</sup>He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. <sup>28</sup>For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Jesus, High Priest of a Better Covenant

<sup>8:1</sup>Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, <sup>2</sup>a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. <sup>3</sup>For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. <sup>4</sup>Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. <sup>5</sup>They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown

you on the mountain.” <sup>6</sup>But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. <sup>7</sup>For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.

<sup>8</sup>For he finds fault with them when he says:

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord,  
 when I will establish a new covenant  
 with the house of Israel  
 and with the house of Judah,  
<sup>9</sup>not like the covenant that I made  
 with their fathers  
 on the day when I took them  
 by the hand to bring them out  
 of the land of Egypt.

For they did not continue in my covenant,  
 and so I showed no concern  
 for them, declares the Lord.

<sup>10</sup>For this is the covenant that I will make  
 with the house of Israel  
 after those days, declares the Lord:  
 I will put my laws into their minds,  
 and write them on their hearts,  
 and I will be their God,  
 and they shall be my people.

<sup>11</sup>And they shall not teach,  
 each one his neighbor  
 and each one his brother, saying,  
 ‘Know the Lord,’  
 for they shall all know me,  
 from the least of them to the greatest.

<sup>12</sup>For I will be merciful toward their  
 iniquities,  
 and I will remember their sins  
 no more.”

<sup>13</sup>In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

## Writing

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

If any man is a devout lover of God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man is a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of the Lord. If any has labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any has [worked] from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any has come at the third hour, let him have no misgivings; because he will in no [way] be deprived thereof. If any has delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any has tarried even until the eleventh hour let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; He gives rest to him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as to him who has [worked] from the first hour. And he shows mercy on the last, and cares for the first [and to the one he gives, and upon the other he bestows gifts]. And He both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering.

Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward[, both the first, and likewise the second]. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast you all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go away hungry. All of you, enjoy the feast of faith: Receive all the riches

of loving-kindness. Let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shone forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He who was held prisoner of it, has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, he has made Hell captive. He angered it when it tasted his flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was angered, when it encountered You in the lower regions. It was angered for it was abolished. It was angered, for it was mocked. [It was angered, for it was slain.] It was angered for it was overthrown. It was angered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen. O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory?

Christ is risen, and you are overthrown.  
 Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen.  
 Christ is risen, and the Angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

—John Chrysostom

### Hymnody

Praise we Him, whose love divine  
 Gives His sacred blood for wine,  
 Gives His body for the feast—  
 Christ the victim, Christ the priest.  
 Alleluia!

—At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing  
 (LSB 633:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God the Father, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You have overcome death and opened the gate of everlasting life to us. Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of our Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by Your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L36)

### The Resurrection of Our Lord—Easter Sunday

Easter is the oldest and highest of all Christian festivals—the festival of festivals, the feast of feasts! On this day, when Christ first stepped triumphantly from the ranks of the dead, all our waiting is declared to be a waiting that is already completed; Christ's triumph makes all the waiting that follows in our lives of faith a building anchored on the foundation that was laid when He whom the builders rejected became the Cornerstone. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VI 7–14

**MONDAY AFTER EASTER**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup>How long, O LORD? Will you forget  
me for- | ever?\*
- How long will you hide your | face  
from me?
- <sup>2</sup>How long must I take counsel in my soul  
and have sorrow in my heart | all the day?\*
- How long shall my enemy be  
exalted | over me?
- <sup>3</sup>Consider and answer me, O | LORD  
my God;\*
- light up my eyes, lest I sleep the | sleep  
of death,
- <sup>4</sup>lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed | over  
him,”\*
- lest my foes rejoice because  
I am | shaken.
- <sup>5</sup>But I have trusted in your | steadfast love;\*
- my heart shall rejoice in your  
sal- | vation.
- <sup>6</sup>I will sing | to the LORD,\*  
because he has dealt bountifully | with  
me.
- Psalm 13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 59*

**Old Testament Reading: Exodus 15:1–18**

The Song of Moses

- <sup>1</sup>Then Moses and the people of Israel  
sang this song to the LORD, saying,
- “I will sing to the LORD, for he has  
triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider he has  
thrown into the sea.
- <sup>2</sup>The LORD is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation;  
this is my God, and I will praise him,  
my father’s God, and I will exalt him.

- <sup>3</sup>The LORD is a man of war;  
the LORD is his name.
- <sup>4</sup>“Pharaoh’s chariots and his host he cast  
into the sea,  
and his chosen officers were sunk  
in the Red Sea.
- <sup>5</sup>The floods covered them;  
they went down into the depths  
like a stone.
- <sup>6</sup>Your right hand, O LORD,  
glorious in power,  
your right hand, O LORD,  
shatters the enemy.
- <sup>7</sup>In the greatness of your majesty  
you overthrow your adversaries;  
you send out your fury;  
it consumes them like stubble.
- <sup>8</sup>At the blast of your nostrils the waters  
piled up;  
the floods stood up in a heap;  
the deeps congealed in the heart  
of the sea.
- <sup>9</sup>The enemy said, ‘I will pursue,  
I will overtake,  
I will divide the spoil,  
my desire shall have its fill of them.  
I will draw my sword; my hand shall  
destroy them.’
- <sup>10</sup>You blew with your wind;  
the sea covered them;  
they sank like lead  
in the mighty waters.
- <sup>11</sup>“Who is like you, O LORD,  
among the gods?  
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,  
awesome in glorious deeds,  
doing wonders?
- <sup>12</sup>You stretched out your right hand;  
the earth swallowed them.

- <sup>13</sup>“You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.
- <sup>14</sup>The peoples have heard; they tremble; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.
- <sup>15</sup>Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.
- <sup>16</sup>Terror and dread fall upon them; because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone, till your people, O LORD, pass by, till the people pass by whom you have purchased.
- <sup>17</sup>You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.
- <sup>18</sup>The LORD will reign forever and ever.”

### New Testament Reading: Hebrews 9:1–28

#### The Earthly Holy Place

<sup>1</sup>Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. <sup>2</sup>For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. <sup>3</sup>Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, <sup>4</sup>having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron’s staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. <sup>5</sup>Above it were the cherubim of

glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

<sup>6</sup>These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, <sup>7</sup>but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. <sup>8</sup>By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing <sup>9</sup>(which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, <sup>10</sup>but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

#### Redemption Through the Blood of Christ

<sup>11</sup>But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup>he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup>For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup>how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

<sup>15</sup>Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems

them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. <sup>16</sup>For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. <sup>17</sup>For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. <sup>18</sup>Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. <sup>19</sup>For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, <sup>20</sup>saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.” <sup>21</sup>And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. <sup>22</sup>Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

<sup>23</sup>Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. <sup>24</sup>For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. <sup>25</sup>Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, <sup>26</sup>for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. <sup>27</sup>And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, <sup>28</sup>so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

## Writing

We have yet to mention that the various titles for Jesus express how He represents us to the Father. They describe the ways He pleads on behalf of human nature and makes atonement for it. These titles are the Paraclete, the Propitiation, and the Atonement. He has the name Paraclete in the Epistle of John: “If any man sin, we have a Paraclete with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” And He is said in the same Epistle to be the atonement for our sins. In like fashion, in the Epistle to the Romans, He is called a propitiation: “Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith.” Of this proportion there was a type in the inmost part of the temple, the Holy of Holies, namely, the golden mercy-seat placed upon the two cherubim. But how could He ever be the Paraclete, the Atonement, and the Propitiation without the power of God? The power of God makes an end of our weakness, flows over the souls of believers, and is administered by Jesus, who indeed is prior to it and is Himself the power of God, who enables a man to say: “I can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens me.” From this we know that Simon Magus, who gave himself the title of “The power of God, which is called great,” was consigned to perdition and destruction, he and his money with him. We, on the other hand, who confess Christ as the true power of God, believe that we share with Him, inasmuch as He is that power, all things in which any energy resides.

—Origen

**Hymnody**

What costly sacrifice  
 To cover human sin!  
 Who but Christ Jesus had the right  
 To enter in?  
 His blood, that sprinkled price,  
 So we might be assured  
 That our inheritance in light  
 Has been secured.  
 —Christ Sits at God’s Right Hand  
 (LSB 564:4)

**Prayer of the Day**

O God, in the paschal feast You restore all creation. Continue to send Your heavenly gifts upon Your people that they may walk in perfect freedom and receive eternal life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L38)

**The Easter Season—The Great Fifty Days**

The Easter season is a fifty-day-long season of joy extending from Easter to Pentecost. During this time, the Church celebrates the end of Christ’s struggles and proclaims His victory over death and the reception of the benefits of His life, death, and resurrection as gracious gifts of love and mercy for all those who believe in Him. This is the Church’s great season of joy! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VI 15–20

**TUESDAY AFTER EASTER****Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> Sing aloud to | God our strength;\*  
 shout for joy to the God of | Jacob!
- <sup>2</sup> Raise a song; sound the | tambourine,\*  
 the sweet lyre | with the harp.
- <sup>3</sup> Blow the trumpet at the | new moon,\*  
 at the full moon, on our | feast day.
- <sup>4</sup> For it is a statute for | Israel,\*  
 a just decree of the God of | Jacob.
- <sup>5</sup> He made it a decree in Joseph when he went  
 out over the land of | Egypt.\*  
 I hear a language I | had not known:
- <sup>6</sup> “I relieved your shoulder of the | burden;\*  
 your hands were freed from the | basket.
- <sup>7</sup> In distress you called, and I  
 de- | livered you,\*  
 I answered you in the secret place  
 of thunder; I tested you at the  
 waters of | Meribah.  
 —Psalm 81:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 40*

**Old Testament Reading:****Exodus 15:22–16:12**

*Bitter Water Made Sweet*

<sup>22</sup>Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. <sup>23</sup>When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah. <sup>24</sup>And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” <sup>25</sup>And he cried to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

There the LORD made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, <sup>26</sup>saying, “If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer.”

<sup>27</sup>Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water.

Bread from Heaven

<sup>16:1</sup>They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, <sup>3</sup>and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.

<sup>5</sup>On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” <sup>6</sup>So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, <sup>7</sup>and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble

against us?” <sup>8</sup>And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.”

<sup>9</sup>Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’” <sup>10</sup>And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. <sup>11</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, <sup>12</sup>“I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

### New Testament Reading: Hebrews 10:1–18

Christ’s Sacrifice Once for All

<sup>1</sup>For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

<sup>2</sup>Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? <sup>3</sup>But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup>For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

<sup>5</sup>Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,

but a body have you prepared for me;  
<sup>6</sup>in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
 you have taken no pleasure.  
<sup>7</sup>Then I said, 'Behold, I have come  
 to do your will, O God,  
 as it is written of me in the scroll  
 of the book.' ”

<sup>8</sup>When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup>then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup>And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

<sup>11</sup>And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup>But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup>waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. <sup>14</sup>For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

<sup>15</sup>And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

<sup>16</sup>“This is the covenant that I will make with them  
 after those days, declares the Lord:  
 I will put my laws on their hearts,  
 and write them on their minds,”

<sup>17</sup>then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

<sup>18</sup>Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

## Writing

So that our readers may the better perceive our teaching I shall clearly and broadly describe it. We treat of the forgiveness of sins in two ways. First, how it is achieved and won. Second, how it is distributed and given to us. Christ has achieved it on the cross, it is true. But he has not distributed or given it on the cross. He has not won it in the supper or sacrament. There he has distributed and given it through the Word, as also in the gospel, where it is preached. He has won it once for all on the cross. But the distribution takes place continuously, before and after, from the beginning to the end of the world. For inasmuch as he had determined once to achieve it, it made no difference to him whether he distributed it before or after, through his Word, as can easily be proved from Scripture. But now there is neither need nor time to do so.

If now I seek the forgiveness of sins, I do not run to the cross, for I will not find it given there. Nor must I hold to the suffering of Christ, as Dr. Karlstadt trifles, in knowledge or remembrance, for I will not find it there either. But I will find in the sacrament or gospel the word which distributes, presents, offers, and gives to me that forgiveness which was won on the cross. Therefore, Luther has rightly taught that whoever has a bad conscience from his sins should go to the sacrament and obtain comfort, not because of the bread and wine, not because of the body and blood of Christ, but because of the word which in the sacrament offers, presents, and gives the body and blood of Christ, given and shed for me. Is that not clear enough?

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb,  
Takes all our sins away;  
A sacrifice of nobler name  
And richer blood than they.  
—Not All the Blood of Beasts  
(LSB 431:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, through the resurrection of Your Son You have secured peace for our troubled consciences. Grant us this peace evermore that trusting in the merit of Your Son we may come at last to the perfect peace of heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L39)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VI 21–26

## WEDNESDAY AFTER EASTER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>Come, bless the LORD, all you servants | of the LORD,\*  
who stand by night in the house | of the LORD!
- <sup>2</sup>Lift up your hands to the | holy place\*  
and | bless the LORD!
- <sup>3</sup>May the LORD bless you from | Zion,\*  
he who made | heaven and earth!  
—Psalm 134

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 135*

## Old Testament Reading: Exodus 16:13–35

[Bread from Heaven]

<sup>13</sup>In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. <sup>14</sup>And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. <sup>15</sup>When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. <sup>16</sup>This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’” <sup>17</sup>And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. <sup>18</sup>But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. <sup>19</sup>And Moses said to them, “Let no one leave any of it over till the morning.” <sup>20</sup>But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. <sup>21</sup>Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted.

<sup>22</sup>On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, <sup>23</sup>he said to them, “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.’” <sup>24</sup>So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded

them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it. <sup>25</sup>Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. <sup>26</sup>Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.”

<sup>27</sup>On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none.

<sup>28</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? <sup>29</sup>See! The LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.” <sup>30</sup>So the people rested on the seventh day.

<sup>31</sup>Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. <sup>32</sup>Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’” <sup>33</sup>And Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar, and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the LORD to be kept throughout your generations.” <sup>34</sup>As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony to be kept. <sup>35</sup>The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan. <sup>36</sup>(An omer is the tenth part of an ephah.)

### **New Testament Reading: Hebrews 10:19–39**

The Full Assurance of Faith

<sup>19</sup>Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the

blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup>by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, <sup>21</sup>and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

<sup>26</sup>For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup>but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup>Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup>How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup>For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” <sup>31</sup>It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

<sup>32</sup>But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, <sup>33</sup>sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. <sup>34</sup>For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession

and an abiding one. <sup>35</sup>Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. <sup>36</sup>For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. <sup>37</sup>For,

“Yet a little while,  
and the coming one will come and  
will not delay;

<sup>38</sup>but my righteous one shall live by faith,  
and if he shrinks back,  
my soul has no pleasure in him.”

<sup>39</sup>But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

## Writing

For just as the truth of this divine promise, once pronounced over us, continues until death, so our faith in it ought never to cease, but to be nourished and strengthened until death by the continual remembrance of this promise made to us in baptism.

Therefore, when we rise from our sins or repent, we are merely returning to the power and the faith of baptism from which we fell, and finding our way back to the promise then made to us, which we deserted when we sinned. For the truth of the promise once made remains steadfast, always ready to receive us back with open arms when we return. . . .

It will therefore be no small gain to a penitent to remember above all his baptism, and, confidently calling to mind the divine promise which he has forsaken, acknowledge that promise before his Lord, rejoicing that he is still within the fortress of salvation because he has been baptized, and abhorring his wicked ingratitude in falling away from its faith and truth. His heart will find

wonderful comfort and will be encouraged to hope for mercy when he considers that the promise which God made to him, which cannot possibly lie, is still unbroken and unchanged, and indeed, cannot be changed by sins, as Paul says (II Tim. 2[:13]): “If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.” This truth of God, I say, will sustain him, so that if all else should fail, this truth, if he believes in it, will not fail him. In it the penitent has a shield against all assaults of the scornful enemy, an answer to the sins that disturb his conscience, an antidote for the dread of death and judgment, and a comfort in every temptation—namely, this one truth—when he says: “God is faithful in his promises [Heb. 10:23; 11:11], and I received his sign in baptism. If God is for me, who is against me?” [Rom. 8:31].

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Then let us now draw near,  
Washed in that precious flood  
And enter the Most Holy Place  
By Jesus’ blood.  
From hearts that are sincere,  
Let tongues our hope profess,  
And trust anew God’s faithful grace  
That we confess.

—Christ Sits at God’s Right Hand  
(LSB 564:5)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by the glorious resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, You destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light. Grant that we who have been raised with Him may abide in His presence and rejoice in the hope of eternal glory;

through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L40)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
VII 1–8

## THURSDAY AFTER EASTER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> When Israel went out from | Egypt,\*  
the house of Jacob from a people  
of strange | language,  
<sup>2</sup> Judah became his sanctu- | ary,\*  
Israel his do- | minion.  
<sup>3</sup> The sea | looked and fled;\*  
Jordan | turned back.  
<sup>4</sup> The mountains | skipped like rams,\*  
the | hills like lambs.  
<sup>5</sup> What ails you, O sea, | that you flee?\*O Jordan, that you | turn back?  
<sup>6</sup> O mountains, that you | skip like rams?\*O | hills, like lambs?  
<sup>7</sup> Tremble, O earth, at the presence | of the  
Lord,\*  
at the presence of the God of | Jacob,  
<sup>8</sup> who turns the rock into a pool of | water,\*  
the flint into a spring of | water.  
—Psalm 114

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 136*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 17:1–16

Water from the Rock

<sup>1</sup>All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment

of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” <sup>3</sup>But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” <sup>4</sup>So Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” <sup>5</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup>Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup>And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

Israel Defeats Amalek

<sup>8</sup>Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. <sup>9</sup>So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.” <sup>10</sup>So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. <sup>11</sup>Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. <sup>12</sup>But Moses’ hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the

other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. <sup>13</sup>And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.”

<sup>15</sup>And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The LORD Is My Banner, <sup>16</sup>saying, “A hand upon the throne of the LORD! The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

### New Testament Reading: Hebrews 11:1–29

By Faith

<sup>1</sup>Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. <sup>2</sup>For by it the people of old received their commendation. <sup>3</sup>By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

<sup>4</sup>By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. <sup>5</sup>By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. <sup>6</sup>And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. <sup>7</sup>By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his

household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

<sup>8</sup>By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup>By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup>For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. <sup>11</sup>By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup>Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

<sup>13</sup>These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. <sup>14</sup>For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. <sup>15</sup>If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup>But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

<sup>17</sup>By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, <sup>18</sup>of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” <sup>19</sup>He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. <sup>20</sup>By faith

Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. <sup>21</sup>By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. <sup>22</sup>By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

<sup>23</sup>By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

<sup>24</sup>By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup>choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup>He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. <sup>27</sup>By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup>By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

<sup>29</sup>By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

## Writing

[The ministry, that is, the Word of God, Baptism, and Holy Communion,] will endure and is not to be replaced by any other. But the incumbents of this ministry do not remain; they die. This necessitates an ever-new supply of preachers, which calls for the employment of certain means. [This ministry] came directly from Christ; but later Christ departed from this earth. Now a new way of sending was instituted, which works through man but is not of man. We were sent according to this method; according to it, we

elect and send others, and we install them in their ministry to preach and to administer the Sacraments. This type of sending is also of God and commanded by God. Even though God resorts to our aid and to human agency, it is He Himself who sends laborers into His vineyard.

Therefore everyone [who preaches] must realize that he has been sent. That is, he must know that he has been called; he dare not venture to sneak into the office furtively and without authorization. It must be done in the open. The sending is done through man, for example, when a city, a prince, or a congregation calls someone into office. But at the same time this person is sent by God.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

These saints of old received God's  
commendation;

They lived as pilgrim-heirs of His salvation.  
Through faith they conquered flame and  
sword and gallows,

God's name to hallow.

—Saints, See the Cloud of Witnesses  
(LSB 667:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life. We humbly pray that we may live before You in righteousness and purity forever; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L35)

**Suggested Reading from  
the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
VII 9–16

**FRIDAY AFTER EASTER**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> I will extol you, my | God and King,\*  
and bless your name forever and | ever.
- <sup>2</sup> Every day I will | bless you\*  
and praise your name forever and | ever.
- <sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD, and greatly | to be  
praised,\*  
and his greatness is un- | searchable.
- <sup>4</sup> One generation shall commend your works  
to an- | other,\*  
and shall declare your | mighty acts.
- <sup>5</sup> On the glorious splendor of your | majesty,\*  
and on your wondrous works,  
I will | meditate.
- <sup>6</sup> They shall speak of the might  
of your | awesome deeds,\*  
and I will declare your | greatness.
- <sup>7</sup> They shall pour forth the fame  
of your abundant | goodness\*  
and shall sing aloud  
of your | righteousness.
- <sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and | merciful,\*  
slow to anger and abounding  
in | steadfast love.
- <sup>9</sup> The LORD is | good to all,\*  
and his mercy is over all that | he  
has made.  
—Psalm 145:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 94*

**Old Testament Reading: Exodus 18:5–27**

Jethro's Advice

<sup>5</sup>Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God. <sup>6</sup>And when he sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her;" <sup>7</sup>Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. And they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. <sup>8</sup>Then Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them in the way, and how the LORD had delivered them. <sup>9</sup>And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the LORD had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

<sup>10</sup>Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. <sup>11</sup>Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people." <sup>12</sup>And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

<sup>13</sup>The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. <sup>14</sup>When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?" <sup>15</sup>And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; <sup>16</sup>when

they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws.”<sup>17</sup> Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good.<sup>18</sup> You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.<sup>19</sup> Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God,<sup>20</sup> and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.<sup>22</sup> And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.<sup>23</sup> If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace.”

<sup>24</sup>So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.  
<sup>25</sup>Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.  
<sup>26</sup>And they judged the people at all times. Any hard case they brought to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves.  
<sup>27</sup>Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went away to his own country.

## New Testament Reading: Hebrews 12:1–24

Jesus, Founder and Perfecter of Our Faith

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,<sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Do Not Grow Weary

<sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.<sup>4</sup> In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.  
<sup>5</sup>And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,  
 nor be weary when reproved by him.  
<sup>6</sup>For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

<sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?<sup>8</sup> If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.<sup>9</sup> Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?  
<sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.  
<sup>11</sup>For the moment all discipline seems painful

rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, <sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. <sup>14</sup>Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. <sup>15</sup>See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; <sup>16</sup>that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. <sup>17</sup>For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

#### A Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken

<sup>18</sup>For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest <sup>19</sup>and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup>For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” <sup>21</sup>Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” <sup>22</sup>But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup>and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup>and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

## Writing

Would you be persuaded that Christ willingly went to His passion? Others, who do not know of their death beforehand, died unwillingly. But He spoke before His passion: “Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified.” Do you know why this Friend of Man did not shun death? It was so the whole world would not perish in its sins. “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed and shall be crucified.” And, “He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.”

And would you know with certainty that the cross is a glory to Jesus? Hear His own words, not mine. Judas had become ungrateful to the Master of the house, and was about to betray Him. Having just gone forth from the table, and having drunk His cup of blessing, in return for that draught of salvation, he sought to shed righteous blood. “He who did eat of His bread, was lifting up his heel against Him.” His hands had but recently received the blessed gifts, and presently for the wages of betrayal he was plotting His death. Being reprov'd, and having heard that word, “You have said it,” he again went out. Then Jesus said: “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.”

Do you see how He knew the cross to be His proper glory? What, should Isaiah not be ashamed of being sawn apart, and Christ should be ashamed of dying for the world? “Now is the Son of Man glorified.” Not that He was without glory before then; for He was “glorified with the glory” that was “before the foundation of the world.” He was ever glorified as God; but now He was to be glorified in wearing the crown of His patience. He did not give up His life

by compulsion, nor was He put to death by murderous violence, but of His own accord. Hear what He says: "I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it up again." I yield it of My own choice to My enemies; for unless I so choose, this could not be.

He came, therefore, of His own set purpose to His passion, rejoicing in His noble deed, smiling at the crown, cheered by the salvation of mankind, not ashamed of the cross, for it was to save the world. For it was no common man who suffered, but God in man's nature, striving for the prize of His patience.

—Cyril of Jerusalem

### Hymnody

They call to us, "Your timid footsteps  
lengthen;  
Throw off sin's weight, your halting weakness  
strengthen.

We kept the faith, we shed our blood, were  
martyred;

Our lives we bartered."

—Saints, See the Cloud of Witnesses  
(LSB 667:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You show those in error the light of Your truth so that they may return to the way of righteousness. Grant faithfulness to all who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's Church that they may avoid whatever is contrary to their confession and follow all such things as are pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L44)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
VII 17–27

## SATURDAY AFTER EASTER

### Psalmody

<sup>3</sup> O LORD, you have brought up  
my soul | from Sheol;\*  
you restored me to life from among those  
who go down | to the pit.

<sup>4</sup> Sing praises to the LORD, O | you his saints,\*  
and give thanks to his | holy name.

<sup>5</sup> For his anger is but for a moment, and his  
favor is for a | lifetime.\*

Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy  
comes with the | morning.

<sup>6</sup> As for me, I said in my pros- | perity,\*  
"I shall nev- | er be moved."

<sup>7</sup> By your favor, O LORD, you made  
my mountain | stand strong;\*  
you hid your face; I | was dismayed.

<sup>8</sup> To you, O | LORD, I cry,\*  
and to the Lord I plead for | mercy:

<sup>9</sup> "What profit is there in my death,  
if I go down | to the pit?\*"   
Will the dust praise you?  
Will it tell of your | faithfulness?

<sup>10</sup> Hear, O LORD, and be merci- | ful to me!\*  
O LORD, be my | helper!"

<sup>11</sup> You have turned for me  
my mourning into | dancing;\*  
you have loosed my sackcloth  
and clothed me with | gladness,

<sup>12</sup> that my glory may sing your praise  
and not be | silent.\*

O LORD my God, I will give thanks  
to you for- | ever!

—Psalm 30:3–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 68*

**Old Testament Reading: Exodus 19:1–25**

Israel at Mount Sinai

<sup>1</sup>On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. <sup>2</sup>They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, <sup>3</sup>while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: <sup>4</sup>You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup>Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; <sup>6</sup>and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

<sup>7</sup>So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. <sup>8</sup>All the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.” And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. <sup>9</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever.”

When Moses told the words of the people to the LORD, <sup>10</sup>the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments <sup>11</sup>and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. <sup>12</sup>And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, ‘Take care not to

go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. <sup>13</sup>No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.” <sup>14</sup>So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. <sup>15</sup>And he said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.”

<sup>16</sup>On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. <sup>17</sup>Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. <sup>18</sup>Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. <sup>19</sup>And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. <sup>20</sup>The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

<sup>21</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to look and many of them perish. <sup>22</sup>Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them.” <sup>23</sup>And Moses said to the LORD, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, ‘Set limits around the mountain and consecrate it.’” <sup>24</sup>And the LORD said to him, “Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you. But do not let the priests

and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest he break out against them.”  
<sup>25</sup>So Moses went down to the people and told them.

### New Testament Reading: Hebrews 13:1–21

#### Sacrifices Pleasing to God

<sup>1</sup>Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup>Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. <sup>3</sup>Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. <sup>4</sup>Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. <sup>5</sup>Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” <sup>6</sup>So we can confidently say,

“The Lord is my helper;  
 I will not fear;  
 what can man do to me?”

<sup>7</sup>Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. <sup>8</sup>Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. <sup>9</sup>Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. <sup>10</sup>We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. <sup>11</sup>For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. <sup>12</sup>So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order

to sanctify the people through his own blood. <sup>13</sup>Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. <sup>14</sup>For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. <sup>15</sup>Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. <sup>16</sup>Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

<sup>17</sup>Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

<sup>18</sup>Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. <sup>19</sup>I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.

#### Benediction

<sup>20</sup>Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, <sup>21</sup>equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

#### Writing

“He who hears you, hears Me; he who rejects you, rejects Me,” (Luke 10:16). . . . This saying of Christ contains the sweet teaching and consolation that when the ministers of the Word prove from the Word of God what they teach, they are to be heard in no other way than as if the voice of God were speaking to us from heaven. For God is present with the ministry and speaks to us through that

medium, and it is efficacious, as the Baptist says: “I am the voice of one calling.” For it is God who calls through the Baptist. In 2 Cor. 13:3 Paul says: “You desire proof that Christ is speaking in me.” Thus in 2 Cor. 5:20 he says: “God makes his appeal through us.” But how? By “entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.” So we read in Is. 59:21: “My Spirit which is upon you and My words which I have put in your mouth, etc.” This teaching wins true reverence for the ministry and inclines the minds to obedience, according to the saying, Heb. 13:17: “Obey your leaders and submit to them.” When the ministers bring and set forth the Word of God, the hearers accept it not as the word of men, but as it is indeed, the Word of God, as Paul says in 1 Thess. 2:13. And it is most comforting that we can truly conclude that when we hear the Word of God out of the mouth of the minister, the Son of God Himself is with us, speaks to us, and is efficacious through that Word. For upon this depends what Christ declares: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven,” “whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” But this dignity, reverence, obedience, and efficacy of the ministry depend on this, that it brings and sets forth the Word of God.

—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

Oh, what glory, far exceeding  
 All that eye has yet perceived!  
 Holiest hearts for ages pleading  
 Never that full joy conceived.  
 God has promised, Christ prepares it;  
 There on high our welcome waits.  
 Ev’ry humble spirit shares it,  
 Christ has passed the eternal gates.

—Sing with All the Saints (LSB 671:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd, without whom nothing is secure. Rescue and preserve us that we may not be lost forever but follow You, rejoicing in the way that leads to eternal life; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C77)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 28–34

## SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

### Psalmody

- <sup>9</sup>How can a young man keep his | way pure?\*
- By guarding it according | to your word.
- <sup>10</sup>With my whole heart I | seek you;\*
- let me not wander from your  
com- | mandments!
- <sup>11</sup>I have stored up your word | in my heart,\*
- that I might not sin a- | gainst you.
- <sup>12</sup>Blessèd are you, | O LORD;\*
- teach me your | statutes!
- <sup>13</sup>With my lips | I declare\*
- all the just decrees | of your mouth.
- <sup>14</sup>In the way of your testimonies | I delight\*
- as much as in all | riches.
- <sup>15</sup>I will meditate on your | precepts\*
- and fix my eyes | on your ways.
- <sup>16</sup>I will delight in your | statutes;\*
- I will not for- | get your word.
- Psalm 119:9–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 91*

**Old Testament Reading: Exodus 20:1–24**

## The Ten Commandments

<sup>1</sup>And God spoke all these words, saying,

<sup>2</sup>“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

<sup>3</sup>“You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup>“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup>but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>7</sup>“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

<sup>8</sup>“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

<sup>12</sup>“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup>“You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup>“You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup>“You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup>“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup>“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

<sup>18</sup>Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off <sup>19</sup>and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.”

<sup>20</sup>Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.” <sup>21</sup>The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

## Laws About Altars

<sup>22</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the people of Israel: ‘You have seen for yourselves that I have talked with you from heaven. <sup>23</sup>You shall not make gods of silver to be with me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold. <sup>24</sup>An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you.’ ”

**New Testament Reading: Luke 4:1–15**

## The Temptation of Jesus

<sup>1</sup>And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness <sup>2</sup>for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were

ended, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup>The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” <sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” <sup>5</sup>And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, <sup>6</sup>and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. <sup>7</sup>If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” <sup>8</sup>And Jesus answered him, “It is written,

“ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’ ”

<sup>9</sup>And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup>for it is written,

“ ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ ”

<sup>11</sup>and

“ ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ”

<sup>12</sup>And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” <sup>13</sup>And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Jesus Begins His Ministry

<sup>14</sup>And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country.

<sup>15</sup>And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

## Writing

[Christ would not] receive me at the Last Judgment if, when summoned to the spiritual office to preach and care for souls, I had left it and busied myself with fighting and with the temporal sword! Why should Christ or his people have anything to do with the sword and going to war, and kill men’s bodies, when he declared that he has come to save the world, not to kill people [John 3:17]? His work is to deal with the gospel and to redeem men from sin and death by his Spirit to help them from this world to everlasting life. According to John 6 [15] he fled and would not let himself be made king; before Pilate he confessed, “My kingship is not of this world” [John 18:36]; and in the garden he bade Peter to put up his sword and said, “All who take the sword will perish by the sword” [Matt. 26:52].

I say this not because I would teach that worldly rulers ought not be Christians, or that a Christian cannot bear the sword and serve God in temporal government. Would to God they were all Christians, or that no one could be a prince unless he were a Christian! Things would be better than they now are, and the Turk would not be so powerful. But what I want to do is to keep a distinction between the callings and offices, so that everyone can see to what God has called him and fulfil the duties of his office faithfully and sincerely in the service of God.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

You strove with Satan, and You won;  
Your faithfulness endured;  
Lend us Your nerve, Your skill and trust  
In God's eternal Word.

—O Lord, Throughout These Forty  
Days (*LSB* 418:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, grant that we who  
have celebrated the Lord's resurrection  
may by Your grace confess in our life and  
conversation that Jesus is Lord and God;  
through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son,  
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy  
Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L41)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
VII 35–41

## MONDAY—EASTER 2

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Praise | the LORD!\*

Praise the LORD, | O my soul!

<sup>2</sup> I will praise the LORD as long | as I live;\*

I will sing praises to my God while I have  
my | being.

<sup>3</sup> Put not your trust in | princes,\*

in a son of man, in whom  
there is no sal- | vation.

<sup>4</sup> When his breath departs

he returns | to the earth;\*  
on that very day his plans | perish.

<sup>5</sup> Blessèd is he whose help is the

God of | Jacob,\*  
whose hope is in the | LORD his God,

<sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth, the sea,  
and all that is | in them,\*

who keeps faith for- | ever;

<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for | the oppressed,\*

who gives food to the | hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free; <sup>8</sup> the LORD  
opens the eyes | of the blind.\*

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed  
down; the LORD loves the | righteous.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD watches over the sojourners; he

upholds the widow and the | fatherless,\*

but the way of the wicked he  
brings to | ruin.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD will reign for- | ever,\*

your God, O Zion, to all  
generations. | Praise the LORD!

—Psalm 146

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 103*

## Old Testament Reading: Exodus 22:20–23:13

[Laws About Social Justice]

<sup>20</sup>“Whoever sacrifices to any god, other  
than the LORD alone, shall be devoted to  
destruction.

<sup>21</sup>“You shall not wrong a sojourner or  
oppress him, for you were sojourners in the  
land of Egypt. <sup>22</sup>You shall not mistreat any  
widow or fatherless child. <sup>23</sup>If you do mistreat  
them, and they cry out to me, I will surely  
hear their cry, <sup>24</sup>and my wrath will burn, and  
I will kill you with the sword, and your wives  
shall become widows and your children  
fatherless.

<sup>25</sup>“If you lend money to any of my people  
with you who is poor, you shall not be like  
a moneylender to him, and you shall not  
exact interest from him. <sup>26</sup>If ever you take  
your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall  
return it to him before the sun goes down,

<sup>27</sup>for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.

<sup>28</sup>“You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

<sup>29</sup>“You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. <sup>30</sup>You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall be with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me.

<sup>31</sup>“You shall be consecrated to me. Therefore you shall not eat any flesh that is torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

<sup>23:1</sup>“You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness. <sup>2</sup>You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, nor shall you bear witness in a lawsuit, siding with the many, so as to pervert justice, <sup>3</sup>nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his lawsuit.

<sup>4</sup>“If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. <sup>5</sup>If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him.

<sup>6</sup>“You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit. <sup>7</sup>Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked. <sup>8</sup>And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.

<sup>9</sup>“You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Laws About the Sabbath and Festivals

<sup>10</sup>“For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, <sup>11</sup>but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.

<sup>12</sup>“Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.

<sup>13</sup>“Pay attention to all that I have said to you, and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let it be heard on your lips.”

### New Testament Reading: Luke 4:16–30

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

<sup>16</sup>And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. <sup>17</sup>And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

<sup>18</sup>“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

<sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

<sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup>And he began to say to them, “Today

this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”<sup>22</sup> And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”<sup>23</sup> And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself.’ What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.”<sup>24</sup> And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.”<sup>25</sup> But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land,<sup>26</sup> and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.<sup>27</sup> And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”<sup>28</sup> When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.<sup>29</sup> And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.<sup>30</sup> But passing through their midst, he went away.

## Writing

Why then did Moses, after the prohibition of any “likeness of anything” (Ex. 20:4) set forth a bronze serpent, placed on a “tree” in a hanging posture, for a spectacle of healing to Israel during the time when, after their idolatry, they were suffering extermination by serpents? Was it not that in this case he was exhibiting the Lord’s cross on which the serpent (the devil) was made a show of, so that to everyone hurt by such snakes, by turning intently from the severity of their sins to the sacraments of Christ’s

cross, salvation was delivered? For whoever gazed upon that cross was freed from the bite of the serpents.

Have you not read in the utterance of the prophet in the Psalms, “The Lord reigns from the tree” (Ps. 96:10, some Latin manuscripts)? I wait to hear what you understand by this and fear that you may perhaps think it means that some carpenter-king is signified and not Christ, who has reigned from that time onward when he overcame the death which resulted from his suffering on “the tree” . . .

What worldly king wears the ensign of his power on his shoulder, but bears no diadem on his head, or scepter in his hand, or some other mark of distinctive vesture? The “King of ages,” Christ Jesus, alone carried on His shoulder his own surpassing glory and power and magnificence—the cross—that according to the prophecy, the Lord himself “reigns from the tree.”

—Tertullian

## Hymnody

Fulfilled is all that David told  
In sure prophetic song of old,  
That God the nations’ king should be  
And reign in triumph from the tree.

—The Royal Banners Forward Go  
(LSB 455:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God heavenly Father, Your Son announced in His hometown synagogue of Nazareth that as the Messiah, His teaching and miracles demonstrated His presence in creation to release it from bondage and bring healing by making all things new. Give us faith to see that His teaching and miracles continue today in the healing medicine of

Your Word and the Sacraments, which put to flight the diseases of our souls; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. (1011)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 42–47

**TUESDAY—EASTER 2**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my in- | tegrity,\*  
and I have trusted in the LORD without | wavering.
  - <sup>2</sup> Prove me, O LORD, and | try me;\*  
test my heart | and my mind.
  - <sup>3</sup> For your steadfast love is be- | fore my eyes,\*  
and I walk in your | faithfulness.
  - <sup>8</sup> O LORD, I love the habitation | of your house\*  
and the place where your | glory dwells.
  - <sup>9</sup> Do not sweep my soul away with | sinners,\*  
nor my life with blood- | thirsty men,
  - <sup>10</sup> in whose hands are evil de- | vices,\*  
and whose right hands are | full of bribes.
  - <sup>11</sup> But as for me, I shall walk in my in- | tegrity;\*  
redeem me, and be gra- | cious to me.
  - <sup>12</sup> My foot stands on | level ground;\*  
in the great assembly I will | bless the LORD.
- Psalm 26:1–3, 8–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 41*

**Old Testament Reading: Exodus 23:14–33**

[Laws About the Sabbath and Festivals]

<sup>14</sup>“Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to me. <sup>15</sup>You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As I commanded you, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. None shall appear before me empty-handed. <sup>16</sup>You shall keep the Feast of Harvest, of the firstfruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field. You shall keep the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor. <sup>17</sup>Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord GOD.

<sup>18</sup>“You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened, or let the fat of my feast remain until the morning.

<sup>19</sup>“The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.

“You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.

Conquest of Canaan Promised

<sup>20</sup>“Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. <sup>21</sup>Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him.

<sup>22</sup>“But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

<sup>23</sup>“When my angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I blot them

out, <sup>24</sup>you shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do as they do, but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces. <sup>25</sup>You shall serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from among you. <sup>26</sup>None shall miscarry or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days. <sup>27</sup>I will send my terror before you and will throw into confusion all the people against whom you shall come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. <sup>28</sup>And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites from before you. <sup>29</sup>I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you. <sup>30</sup>Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land. <sup>31</sup>And I will set your border from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates, for I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. <sup>32</sup>You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. <sup>33</sup>They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”

### **New Testament Reading: Luke 4:31–44**

Jesus Heals a Man with an Unclean Demon

<sup>31</sup>And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, <sup>32</sup>and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. <sup>33</sup>And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, <sup>34</sup>“Ha! What

have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” <sup>35</sup>But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. <sup>36</sup>And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” <sup>37</sup>And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

Jesus Heals Many

<sup>38</sup>And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. <sup>39</sup>And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

<sup>40</sup>Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. <sup>41</sup>And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

Jesus Preaches in Synagogues

<sup>42</sup>And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, <sup>43</sup>but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” <sup>44</sup>And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

## Writing

O, glorious office! [the office of ministry] No matter how sick a person may be in his soul, the Gospel can heal him. No matter how deeply a person has fallen into the corruption of sin, the Gospel can pull him out. No matter how troubled, frightened, and afflicted a person may be, the Gospel can comfort him. Whatever the condition in which a person finds himself, even if he is convinced that he must perish because of it, the preachers can confidently oppose him, saying: “No, as certainly as God lives, He does not want the death of any sinner. You shall not perish; instead, you shall be saved. Turn to Jesus, who can evermore save all who come to God through Him.” And if one who lies near death calls out: “God, what have I done? Woe to me! Now it is too late! I am lost!” the preachers should call to him: “No, no, it is not too late! Commit your departing soul to Jesus. You too shall still be with Him in paradise today.” O, glorious, high office, too high for the angels! May we always hold it in high regard, not looking at the person who bears it and despising his weakness, but looking instead at the Institutor of this office and His exuberant goodness. Let us turn to Him in faith so we can experience the blessings of which the preachers have spoken and, through them, be gathered together one day into the barns of heaven as a completely ripe sheaf.

—C. F. W. Walther

## Hymnody

Your touch then, Lord, brought life and health,

Gave speech and strength and sight;  
And youth renewed and frenzy calmed  
Revealed You, Lord of light.

And now, O Lord, be near to bless,  
Almighty as before,

In crowded street, by beds of pain,  
As by Gennes’ret’s shore.

—Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old  
(*LSB* 846:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, in Your ministry of teaching, casting out demons, and healing the sick, You proclaimed the Good News of the kingdom of God. Send us into all the world to announce that today, in You, Scripture has been fulfilled, the new creation has come, and the healing of the nations is here; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1012)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 48–51

## WEDNESDAY—EASTER 2

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> The LORD reigns; let the peoples | tremble!\*  
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim;  
let the | earth quake!

<sup>2</sup> The LORD is great in | Zion;\*  
he is exalted over all the | peoples.

<sup>3</sup>Let them praise your great and | awesome name!\*

Ho- | ly is he!

<sup>4</sup>The King in his might loves | justice.\*

You have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in | Jacob.

<sup>5</sup>Exalt the LORD our God; worship at his | footstool!\*

Ho- | ly is he!

—Psalm 99:1-5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 79*

## Old Testament Reading: Exodus 24:1–18

The Covenant Confirmed

<sup>1</sup>Then he said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. <sup>2</sup>Moses alone shall come near to the LORD, but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him.”

<sup>3</sup>Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.” <sup>4</sup>And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>5</sup>And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. <sup>6</sup>And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. <sup>7</sup>Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” <sup>8</sup>And 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.”

<sup>9</sup>Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, <sup>10</sup>and 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. <sup>11</sup>And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

<sup>12</sup>The 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.” <sup>13</sup>So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. <sup>14</sup>And 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.”

<sup>15</sup>Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. <sup>16</sup>The 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. <sup>17</sup>Now 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. <sup>18</sup>Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

## New Testament Reading: Luke 5:1–16

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

<sup>1</sup>On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret,

<sup>2</sup>and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. <sup>4</sup>And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup>And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." <sup>6</sup>And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. <sup>7</sup>They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup>But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." <sup>9</sup>For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, <sup>10</sup>and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." <sup>11</sup>And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

<sup>12</sup>While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." <sup>13</sup>And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him. <sup>14</sup>And he charged him to tell no one, but "go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them." <sup>15</sup>But now even more

the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. <sup>16</sup>But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

**Writing**

See now, I will send out many fishers,  
saith the Lord, whose work is to catch  
them. And then I will many hunters send  
also, whose work is to catch them on all the  
mountains and on all the highlands and in  
all of the hollows.

How easily, though, could the Highest do  
without us  
And turn away his mercy from us,  
When our perverted hearts in evil  
from him part  
And in their stubbornness  
To their destruction run.  
But what response  
From his paternal spirit?  
Withhold his loving kindness  
From us, and, just as we from him, withdraw,  
And then betray us to the foe's deceit  
and spite?

No, God is all the time intending  
On the proper path to keep us,  
Sheltered by his glory's grace.  
Yea, when we have gone astray  
And the proper way abandon,  
He will even have us sought for. . . .

If God commands, then must his blessing  
In all that we may do  
Abundantly endure,  
E'en though both fear and care oppose us.  
The talent he hath given us  
Would he with int'rest have returned him;  
If only we ourselves not hide it,  
He gladly helps, that it may bear its fruit.

What can then thee in all thy dealings  
 frighten,  
 If thee, my heart, God doth his hands extend?  
 Before his merest nod doth all misfortune  
 yield,  
 And he, most huge in might, can shelter and  
 protect thee.  
 When trouble, hardship's toil, grudge, plague  
 and falsehood come,  
 Intending all thou dost to harass and to  
 hinder,  
 Let passing discontent thy purpose not  
 diminish;  
 The work which he assigns will be for none  
 too hard.  
 With steadfast joy go forth, thou shalt see at  
 the finish  
 That what before caused pain occurred to  
 bring thee blessing.

Sing, pray, and walk in God's own pathways,  
 Perform thine own work ever true,  
 And trust in heaven's ample blessing,  
 Then shall he stand by thee anew;  
 For him who doth his confidence  
 Rest in God, he forsaketh not.  
 —Johann Sebastian Bach

### Hymnody

Your hand, O Lord, in days of old  
 Was strong to heal and save;  
 It triumphed over ills and death,  
 O'er darkness and the grave.  
 To You they came, the blind, the mute,  
 The palsied and the lame,  
 The lepers in their misery,  
 The sick with fevered frame.  
 —Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old  
 (LSB 846:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, when Peter fell before You in repentance as a sinful man, You absolved him of his sins by saying to him, "Fear not"; for by Your grace, he was worthy to stand in Your presence. Send us out like Peter to catch men alive, announcing to the world the forgiveness of sins that comes through You, our only Savior and Lord; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1013)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 52–58

## THURSDAY—EASTER 2

### Psalmody

- <sup>25</sup> My soul clings | to the dust;\*  
 give me life according | to your word!
- <sup>26</sup> When I told of my ways, you | answered me;\*  
 teach me your | statutes!
- <sup>27</sup> Make me understand the way  
 of your | precepts,\*  
 and I will meditate on your | wondrous works.
- <sup>28</sup> My soul melts away for | sorrow;\*  
 strengthen me according | to your word!
- <sup>29</sup> Put false ways | far from me\*  
 and graciously teach | me your law!
- <sup>30</sup> I have chosen the way of | faithfulness;\*  
 I set your just decrees be- | fore me.
- <sup>31</sup> I cling to your testimonies, | O LORD;\*  
 let me not be | put to shame!

<sup>32</sup>I will run in the way of your  
com- | mandments\*  
when you en- | large my heart!  
—Psalm 119:25–32

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 9*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 25:1–22

Contributions for the Sanctuary

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. <sup>3</sup>And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, <sup>4</sup>blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats’ hair, <sup>5</sup>tanned rams’ skins, goatskins, acacia wood, <sup>6</sup>oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, <sup>7</sup>onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. <sup>8</sup>And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. <sup>9</sup>Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

The Ark of the Covenant

<sup>10</sup>“They shall make an ark of acacia wood. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. <sup>11</sup>You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and outside shall you overlay it, and you shall make on it a molding of gold around it. <sup>12</sup>You shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them on its four feet, two rings on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. <sup>13</sup>You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. <sup>14</sup>And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark by

them. <sup>15</sup>The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. <sup>16</sup>And you shall put into the ark the testimony that I shall give you.

<sup>17</sup>“You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. <sup>18</sup>And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. <sup>19</sup>Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. <sup>20</sup>The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. <sup>21</sup>And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. <sup>22</sup>There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.”

*Additional Reading: Exodus 25:23–30:38*

### New Testament Reading: Luke 5:17–39

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

<sup>17</sup>On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. <sup>18</sup>And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, <sup>19</sup>but finding no way to bring him in, because of the

crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. <sup>20</sup>And when he saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” <sup>21</sup>And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” <sup>22</sup>When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, “Why do you question in your hearts? <sup>23</sup>Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk?’ <sup>24</sup>But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the man who was paralyzed—“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.” <sup>25</sup>And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. <sup>26</sup>And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.”

#### Jesus Calls Levi

<sup>27</sup>After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, “Follow me.” <sup>28</sup>And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

<sup>29</sup>And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. <sup>30</sup>And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” <sup>31</sup>And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>32</sup>I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

#### A Question About Fasting

<sup>33</sup>And they said to him, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so

do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.” <sup>34</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>35</sup>The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.” <sup>36</sup>He also told them a parable: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. <sup>37</sup>And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. <sup>38</sup>But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. <sup>39</sup>And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’ ”

## Writing

We teach that through the Holy Spirit’s work we are born anew and justified. But the sense is not that after regeneration no unrighteousness clings anymore to the justified and regenerate in their being and life. It means that Christ covers all their sins (which in this life still dwell in nature) with His complete obedience. But despite this they are declared and regarded godly and righteous by faith and for the sake of Christ’s obedience (which Christ rendered to the Father for us from His birth to His most humiliating death on the cross [Philippians 2:8]). Still, because of their corrupt nature, they are and will remain sinners to the grave. . . .

True contrition must come first. Out of pure grace, for the sake of the only Mediator, Christ [1 Timothy 2:5], without any works and merit, people are righteous before God in the way stated above (i.e., they are received into grace). The Holy Spirit is also

given to them. He renews and sanctifies them and works in them love for God and for their neighbor. But the beginning of renewal is imperfect in this life. Sin still dwells in the flesh, even in the regenerate. Therefore, the righteousness of faith before God comes from the free crediting of Christ's righteousness, without the addition of our works. So our sins are forgiven us and covered and are not charged against us (Romans 4:6–8).

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord III 22–23

### Hymnody

We deserve but grief and shame,  
Yet His words, rich grace revealing,  
Pardon, peace, and life proclaim;  
Here our ills have perfect healing.  
Firmly in these words believe:  
Jesus sinners doth receive.

—Jesus Sinners Doth Receive  
(LSB 609:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, absolve Your people from their offenses that from the bonds of our sins, which by reason of our frailty we have brought upon ourselves, we may be delivered by Your bountiful goodness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H83)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 59–61

## FRIDAY—EASTER 2

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> It is good to give thanks | to the LORD,\*  
to sing praises to your name, | O Most High;
- <sup>2</sup> to declare your steadfast love  
in the | morning,\*  
and your faithful- | ness by night,
- <sup>3</sup> to the music of the lute | and the harp,\*  
to the melody | of the lyre.
- <sup>4</sup> For you, O LORD, have made me glad | by  
your work;\*  
at the works of your hands I | sing for joy.
- <sup>5</sup> How great are your works, | O LORD!\*  
Your thoughts are | very deep!
- <sup>6</sup> The stupid man cannot know; the fool  
cannot under- | stand this:\*
- <sup>7</sup> that though the wicked sprout like  
grass and all evildoers flourish, they are  
doomed to destruction for- | ever;
- <sup>8</sup> but you, | O LORD,\*  
are on high for- | ever.
- <sup>9</sup> For behold, your enemies, O LORD, for  
behold, your enemies shall | perish;\*  
all evildoers shall be | scattered.  
—Psalm 92:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 92*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 31:1–18

Oholiab and Bezalel

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, <sup>3</sup>and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, <sup>4</sup>to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, <sup>5</sup>in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. <sup>6</sup>And behold, I have

appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you: <sup>7</sup>the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent, <sup>8</sup>the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, <sup>9</sup>and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, <sup>10</sup>and the finely worked garments, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, for their service as priests, <sup>11</sup>and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense for the Holy Place. According to all that I have commanded you, they shall do.”

The Sabbath

<sup>12</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, <sup>13</sup>“You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. <sup>14</sup>You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. <sup>15</sup>Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. <sup>16</sup>Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. <sup>17</sup>It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’ ”

<sup>18</sup>And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai,

the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

### New Testament Reading: Luke 6:1–19

<sup>1</sup>On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. <sup>2</sup>But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” <sup>3</sup>And Jesus answered them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: <sup>4</sup>how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?” <sup>5</sup>And he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”

<sup>6</sup>On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. <sup>7</sup>And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. <sup>8</sup>But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come and stand here.” And he rose and stood there. <sup>9</sup>And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” <sup>10</sup>And after looking around at them all he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored. <sup>11</sup>But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

<sup>12</sup>In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. <sup>13</sup>And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: <sup>14</sup>Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and

Bartholomew, <sup>15</sup>and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, <sup>16</sup>and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

<sup>17</sup>And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, <sup>18</sup>who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. <sup>19</sup>And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

### Writing

One thing, and only one thing, is necessary for Christian life, righteousness, and freedom. That one thing is the most holy Word of God, the gospel of Christ, as Christ says, John 11[:25], “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live”; and John 8[:36], “So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed”; and Matt. 4[:4], “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Let us then consider it certain and firmly established that the soul can do without anything except the Word of God and that where the Word of God is missing there is no help at all for the soul. If it has the Word of God it is rich and lacks nothing since it is the Word of life, truth, light, peace, righteousness, salvation, joy, liberty, wisdom, power, grace, glory, and of every incalculable blessing. This is why the prophet in the entire Psalm [119] and in many other places yearns and sighs for the

Word of God and uses so many names to describe it.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Teach us the lesson Thou hast taught:  
To feel for those Thy blood hath bought,  
That ev’ry word and deed and thought  
May work a work for Thee.

—O God of Mercy, God of Might (*LSB*  
852:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, our Sabbath rest, You called the twelve apostles to go out into all the world to carry on Your proclamation of the kingdom of God and Your miracles of release. May Your Church with its apostolic foundation continue to announce the Good News that in You there is healing and forgiveness; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1014)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 62–68

## SATURDAY—EASTER 2

### Psalmody

<sup>16</sup> When men in the camp were jealous  
of | Moses\*  
and Aaron, the holy one | of the LORD,  
<sup>17</sup> the earth opened and swallowed  
up | Dathan,\*  
and covered the company of | Abiram.

<sup>18</sup> Fire also broke out in their | company;\*  
the flame burned up the | wicked.

<sup>19</sup> They made a calf in | Horeb\*  
and worshiped a metal | image.

<sup>20</sup> They exchanged the glo- | ry of God\*  
for the image of an ox that | eats grass.

<sup>21</sup> They forgot God, their | Savior,\*  
who had done great things in | Egypt,

<sup>22</sup> wondrous works in the | land of Ham,\*  
and awesome deeds by the | Red Sea.

<sup>23</sup> Therefore he said he would de- | stroy  
them—\*  
had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in  
the breach before him, to turn away his  
wrath from de- | stroying them.  
—Psalm 106:16–23

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 68*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 32:1–14

#### The Golden Calf

<sup>1</sup>When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” <sup>2</sup>So Aaron said to them, “Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” <sup>3</sup>So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup>And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” <sup>5</sup>When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD.”

<sup>6</sup>And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

<sup>7</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. <sup>8</sup>They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’” <sup>9</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. <sup>10</sup>Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.”

<sup>11</sup>But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup>Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. <sup>13</sup>Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.’” <sup>14</sup>And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

## New Testament Reading: Luke 6:20–38

### The Beatitudes

<sup>20</sup>And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

<sup>21</sup>“Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

<sup>22</sup>“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! <sup>23</sup>Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

### Jesus Pronounces Woes

<sup>24</sup>“But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

<sup>25</sup>“Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

<sup>26</sup>“Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

### Love Your Enemies

<sup>27</sup>“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup>To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. <sup>30</sup>Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. <sup>31</sup>And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

<sup>32</sup>“If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup>And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

<sup>34</sup>And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. <sup>35</sup>But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. <sup>36</sup>Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

### Judging Others

<sup>37</sup>“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; <sup>38</sup>give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

## Writing

Although I am an unworthy and condemned man, my God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation without any merit on my part, out of pure, free mercy, so that from now on I need nothing except faith which believes that this is true. Why should I not therefore freely, joyfully, with all my heart, and with an eager will do all things which I know are pleasing and acceptable to such a Father who has overwhelmed me with his inestimable riches? I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbor, just as Christ offered himself to me; I will do nothing in this life except what I see is necessary, profitable, and

salutary to my neighbor, since through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ.” Behold, from faith thus flow forth love and joy in the Lord, and from love a joyful, willing, and free mind that serves one’s neighbor. . . . he most freely and most willingly spends himself and all that he has, whether he wastes all on the thankless or whether he gains a reward. . . . Therefore, if we recognize the great and precious things which are given us, as Paul says [Rom. 5:5], our hearts will be filled by the Holy Spirit with the love which makes us free, joyful, almighty workers and conquerors over all tribulations, servants of our neighbors, and yet lords of all. . . . Just as our neighbor is in need and lacks that in which we abound, so we were in need before God and lacked his mercy. Hence, as our heavenly Father has in Christ freely come to our aid, we also ought freely to help our neighbor through our body and its works, and each one should become as it were a Christ to the other that we may be Christs to one another and Christ may be the same in all, that is, that we may be truly Christians.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Lord of all nations, grant me grace  
To love all people, ev’ry race;  
And in each person may I see  
My kindred, loved, redeemed by Thee.  
—Lord of All Nations, Grant Me  
Grace (LSB 844:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, in Your mercy so guide the course of this world that we may forgive as we have been forgiven and joyfully serve

You in godly peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C61)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 69–72

## THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

### Psalmody

- <sup>49</sup> Remember your word to your | servant,\*  
in which you have | made me hope.
- <sup>50</sup> This is my comfort in my af- | fliction,\*  
that your promise | gives me life.
- <sup>51</sup> The insolent utterly de- | ride me,\*  
but I do not turn away | from your law.
- <sup>52</sup> When I think of your just decrees | from  
of old,\*  
I take comfort, | O LORD.
- <sup>53</sup> Hot indignation seizes me because  
of the | wicked,\*  
who for- | sake your law.
- <sup>54</sup> Your statutes have | been my songs\*  
in the house of my | sojourning.
- <sup>55</sup> I remember your name  
in the night, | O LORD,\*  
and | keep your law.
- <sup>56</sup> This blessing has fal- | len to me,\*  
that I have kept your | precepts.  
—Psalm 119:49–56

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 79*

## Old Testament Reading: Exodus 32:15–35

[The Golden Calf]

<sup>15</sup>Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written. <sup>16</sup>The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. <sup>17</sup>When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.” <sup>18</sup>But he said, “It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear.” <sup>19</sup>And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. <sup>20</sup>He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.

<sup>21</sup>And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?” <sup>22</sup>And Aaron said, “Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. <sup>23</sup>For they said to me, ‘Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ <sup>24</sup>So I said to them, ‘Let any who have gold take it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”

<sup>25</sup>And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), <sup>26</sup>then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Who is on the LORD’s side? Come to me.” And all the sons of Levi gathered

around him. <sup>27</sup>And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’” <sup>28</sup>And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. <sup>29</sup>And Moses said, “Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.”

<sup>30</sup>The next day Moses said to the people, “You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” <sup>31</sup>So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. <sup>32</sup>But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.”

<sup>33</sup>But the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.

<sup>34</sup>But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.”

<sup>35</sup>Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.

## New Testament Reading: Luke 6:39–49

<sup>39</sup>He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? <sup>40</sup>A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. <sup>41</sup>Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but

do not notice the log that is in your own eye?<sup>42</sup>How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.

<sup>43</sup>“For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, <sup>44</sup>for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup>The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Build Your House on the Rock

<sup>46</sup>“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? <sup>47</sup>Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: <sup>48</sup>he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. <sup>49</sup>But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

## Writing

Behold, I come to You, Lord, that I may prosper by Your gift and be delighted at Your holy banquet which You, O God, in Your sweetness have prepared for Your poor. Behold, all that I can or ought to desire is in You. You are my salvation and my

redemption, my hope and strength, my honor and glory.

Gladden, then, this day the soul of Your servant because I have raised my heart to You, O Lord Jesus. I long to receive You now, devoutly and reverently. I desire to bring You into my house that, with Zacchaeus, I may merit Your blessing and be numbered among the children of Abraham.

My soul longs for Your Body; my heart desires to be united with You. Give me Yourself—it is enough; for without You there is no consolation. Without You I cannot exist, without Your visitation I cannot live. I must often come to You, therefore, and receive the strength of my salvation lest, deprived of this heavenly food, I grow weak on the way. Once, most merciful Jesus, while preaching to the people and healing their many ills, You said: “I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.” Deal with me likewise, You who have left Yourself in this Sacrament for the consolation of the faithful. You are sweet refreshment to the soul, and he who eats You worthily will be a sharer in, and an heir to, eternal glory.

It is indeed necessary for me, who falls and sins so often, who so quickly becomes lax and weak, to renew, cleanse, and inflame myself through frequent prayer, confession, and the holy reception of Your Body, lest perhaps by abstaining too long, I fall away from my holy purpose. For from the days of his youth the senses of man are prone to evil, and unless divine aid strengthens him, he quickly falls deeper. But Holy Communion removes him from evil and confirms him in good.

—Thomas Kempis

## Hymnody

As I pray, dear Jesus, hear me;  
 Let Your words in me take root.  
 May Your Spirit e'er be near me  
 That I bear abundant fruit.  
 May I daily sing Your praise,  
 From my heart glad anthems raise,  
 Till my highest praise is given  
 In the endless joy of heaven.  
 —Speak, O Lord, Your Servant Listens  
 (LSB 589:4)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L42)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 73–76

## MONDAY—EASTER 3

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph | like a flock!\*
- You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, | shine forth.
- <sup>2</sup>Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Ma- | nasseh,\*
- stir up your might and come to | save us!
- <sup>3</sup>Restore us, | O God,\*
- let your face shine, that we | may be saved!

- <sup>4</sup>O LORD | God of hosts,\*
- how long will you be angry  
 with your | people's prayers?
- <sup>5</sup>You have fed them with the | bread of tears\*  
 and given them tears to drink  
 in full | measure.
- <sup>6</sup>You make us an object of contention  
 for our | neighbors,\*  
 and our enemies laugh a- | mong  
 themselves.
- <sup>7</sup>Restore us, O | God of hosts,\*  
 let your face shine, that we | may be  
 saved!
- Psalm 80:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 27*

## Old Testament Reading: Exodus 33:1–23

The Command to Leave Sinai

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses, “Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give it.’ <sup>2</sup>I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>3</sup>Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.”

<sup>4</sup>When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. <sup>5</sup>For the LORD had said to Moses, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.’” <sup>6</sup>Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

### The Tent of Meeting

<sup>7</sup>Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. <sup>8</sup>Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. <sup>9</sup>When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. <sup>10</sup>And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. <sup>11</sup>Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

### Moses' Intercession

<sup>12</sup>Moses said to the LORD, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' <sup>13</sup>Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." <sup>14</sup>And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." <sup>15</sup>And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. <sup>16</sup>For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"

<sup>17</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." <sup>18</sup>Moses said, "Please show me your glory." <sup>19</sup>And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. <sup>20</sup>But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." <sup>21</sup>And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, <sup>22</sup>and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. <sup>23</sup>Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

### New Testament Reading: Luke 7:1–17

#### Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

<sup>1</sup>After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup>Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. <sup>3</sup>When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. <sup>4</sup>And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, <sup>5</sup>for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue." <sup>6</sup>And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. <sup>7</sup>Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. <sup>8</sup>For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say

to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." <sup>9</sup>When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." <sup>10</sup>And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son

<sup>11</sup>Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. <sup>12</sup>As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. <sup>13</sup>And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." <sup>14</sup>Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." <sup>15</sup>And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. <sup>16</sup>Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" <sup>17</sup>And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

**Writing**

From the Gospel of today and from the son of the widow we should learn to perceive the great power which God, through Christ, will apply to us at the last day, when, by a word, He will recall to life all men and give everlasting salvation to believers. This will be done in the twinkling of an eye, in order that we may not doubt in the least either the power of our Lord Jesus to do this or His will

gladly to do it. For here we have the example. The son of the widow is dead; he has lost the gift of hearing and all other senses. But when Christ speaks to him, he hears. This is certainly a strange and wonderful incident. He that does not hear, hears; and he that does not live, lives. Nothing is done but that Christ opens His mouth and bids him arise. The single word is so powerful that death has to vanish and life return. . . .

Before the Lord death is not death at all. For us it is called and is death when we die. But before God it is a light sleep which could not be any lighter.

These very facts our Lord Jesus wishes to impress upon our minds, so that we may not fear when pestilence and death itself draw near, but that we may learn to say: O death, what can you do even in your worst form? You have terrible teeth, which you show to frighten me, for I do not like to die. But I will not merely behold your work when you, like an executioner, draw the sword; but I will remember what our Lord can and will do when you have slain me; namely, that He is not afraid of you and does not care for you raging and destroying, but says: "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." If you can kill my Christians, I can destroy you and recall them to life again.

—Martin Luther

**Hymnody**

In the very midst of life  
 Snares of death surround us;  
 Who shall help us in the strife  
 Lest the foe confound us?  
 Thou only, Lord, Thou only!  
 We mourn that we have greatly erred,  
 That our sins Thy wrath have stirred.

Holy and righteous God!  
 Holy and mighty God!  
 Holy and all-merciful Savior!  
 Eternal Lord God!  
 Save us lest we perish  
 In the bitter pangs of death.  
 Have mercy, O Lord!

—In the Very Midst of Life (*LSB* 755:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, by Your almighty Word You set in order all things in heaven and on earth. Put away from us all things hurtful, and give us those things that are beneficial for us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C62)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 77–84

## TUESDAY—EASTER 3

### Psalmody

- <sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk | in your truth;\*  
 unite my heart to | fear your name.
- <sup>12</sup> I give thanks to you, O Lord my God,  
 with | my whole heart,\*  
 and I will glorify your name for- | ever.
- <sup>13</sup> For great is your steadfast | love  
 toward me;\*  
 you have delivered my soul from the  
 depths | of Sheol.
- <sup>14</sup> O God, insolent men have risen up against  
 me; a band of ruthless men | seek my life,\*  
 and they do not set you be- | fore them.

- <sup>15</sup> But you, O Lord, are a God merciful  
 and | gracious,\*  
 slow to anger and abounding in steadfast  
 love and | faithfulness.
- <sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me;\*  
 give your strength to your servant, and  
 save the son of your maid- | servant.
- <sup>17</sup> Show me a sign of your | favor,\*  
 that those who hate me may see and be  
 put to shame because you, LORD, have  
 helped me and com- | forted me.  
 —Psalm 86:11–17

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 34*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 34:1–28

Moses Makes New Tablets

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. <sup>2</sup>Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. <sup>3</sup>No one shall come up with you, and let no one be seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain.” <sup>4</sup>So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone. <sup>5</sup>The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup>keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the

children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”<sup>8</sup> And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.<sup>9</sup> And he said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”

The Covenant Renewed

<sup>10</sup>And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.

<sup>11</sup>“Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

<sup>12</sup>Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. <sup>13</sup>You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim <sup>14</sup>(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), <sup>15</sup>lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, <sup>16</sup>and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods.

<sup>17</sup>“You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal.

<sup>18</sup>“You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time

appointed in the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt. <sup>19</sup>All that open the womb are mine, all your male livestock, the firstborn of cow and sheep.

<sup>20</sup>The firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before me empty-handed.

<sup>21</sup>“Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest. <sup>22</sup>You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end. <sup>23</sup>Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel. <sup>24</sup>For I will cast out nations before you and enlarge your borders; no one shall covet your land, when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.

<sup>25</sup>“You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened, or let the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover remain until the morning. <sup>26</sup>The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.”

<sup>27</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” <sup>28</sup>So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

**New Testament Reading: Luke 7:18–35**

## Messengers from John the Baptist

<sup>18</sup>The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, <sup>19</sup>calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” <sup>20</sup>And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’” <sup>21</sup>In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. <sup>22</sup>And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>23</sup>And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

<sup>24</sup>When John’s messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>25</sup>What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings’ courts. <sup>26</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>27</sup>This is he of whom it is written,

“ ‘Behold, I send my messenger  
before your face,  
who will prepare your way  
before you.’

<sup>28</sup>I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

<sup>29</sup>(When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having

been baptized with the baptism of John, <sup>30</sup>but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

<sup>31</sup>“To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? <sup>32</sup>They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,

“ ‘We played the flute for you,  
and you did not dance;  
we sang a dirge,  
and you did not weep.’

<sup>33</sup>For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ <sup>34</sup>The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ <sup>35</sup>Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”

**Writing**

Christ as a man was in the Father’s thoughts from the beginning, because the Word was to be both clay and flesh just as the earth was then. Thus the Father said to the Son: “Let Us make man in Our own image, after Our likeness.” And God made man, that is to say, He molded and fashioned the creature, and made him after His own image, that is, in the image of Christ. And the Word was God also, and He was in the image of God, who “thought it not robbery to be equal to God.” So it is that the clay which was even then putting on the image of Christ, who was to come in the flesh, was not only the work of God but also God’s pledge and promise. . . . God forbid that He should abandon to everlasting destruction the labor of His own hands, the care of His own thoughts, the receptacle of His own Spirit, the queen of His

creation, the inheritor of His freedom, the priestess of His religion, the champion of His testimony, the sister of His Christ! . . . Now, as He requires from us love to our neighbor, after love of Himself, so He will do what He has commanded. He will love the flesh [mankind], which is His neighbor. He will love it, though it is infirm, since His “strength is made perfect in weakness.” He will love it, though it is disordered, since “those who are whole do not need a physician, but those who are sick.” He will love it, though it is dishonorable, since “we bestow more abundant honor on the less honorable members.” He will love it, though it is ruined, since He says, “I am come to save that which was lost.” He will love it, though it is sinful, since He says, “I desire the salvation of the sinner.” He will love it, though it is condemned, for He says “I shall wound and also heal.”

—Tertullian

**Hymnody**

He comes the broken heart to bind,  
The bleeding soul to cure,  
And with the treasures of His grace  
To enrich the humble poor.

—Hark the Glad Sound (LSB 349:3)

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord Jesus, prepare us to receive Your very body and blood by giving us repentance to weep over our sins and then rejoice that in You the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have Good News preached to them; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1015)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 85–90

**WEDNESDAY—EASTER 3**

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup> How lovely is your | dwelling place,\*  
O | LORD of hosts!

<sup>2</sup> My soul longs, yes, faints for the  
courts | of the LORD;\*  
my heart and flesh sing for joy  
to the | living God.

<sup>3</sup> Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may | lay her young,\*  
at your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
my King | and my God.

<sup>4</sup> Blessèd are those who dwell | in your  
house,\*  
ever sing- | ing your praise!  
—Psalm 84:1–4

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 23*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Exodus 34:29–35:21**

The Shining Face of Moses

<sup>29</sup>When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. <sup>30</sup>Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. <sup>31</sup>But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the

congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. <sup>32</sup>Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. <sup>33</sup>And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

<sup>34</sup>Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, <sup>35</sup>the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

#### Sabbath Regulations

<sup>35:1</sup>Moses assembled all the congregation of the people of Israel and said to them, "These are the things that the LORD has commanded you to do. <sup>2</sup>Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. <sup>3</sup>You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day."

#### Contributions for the Tabernacle

<sup>4</sup>Moses said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "This is the thing that the LORD has commanded. <sup>5</sup>Take from among you a contribution to the LORD. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the LORD's contribution: gold, silver, and bronze; <sup>6</sup>blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen; goats' hair, <sup>7</sup>tanned rams' skins, and goatskins; acacia wood, <sup>8</sup>oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, <sup>9</sup>and onyx stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

<sup>10</sup>"Let every skillful craftsman among you come and make all that the LORD has commanded: <sup>11</sup>the tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its hooks and its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases; <sup>12</sup>the ark with its poles, the mercy seat, and the veil of the screen; <sup>13</sup>the table with its poles and all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; <sup>14</sup>the lampstand also for the light, with its utensils and its lamps, and the oil for the light; <sup>15</sup>and the altar of incense, with its poles, and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the door, at the door of the tabernacle; <sup>16</sup>the altar of burnt offering, with its grating of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils, the basin and its stand; <sup>17</sup>the hangings of the court, its pillars and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court; <sup>18</sup>the pegs of the tabernacle and the pegs of the court, and their cords; <sup>19</sup>the finely worked garments for ministering in the Holy Place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, for their service as priests."

<sup>20</sup>Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. <sup>21</sup>And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments.

*Additional Reading: Exodus 35:22–38:20*

#### **New Testament Reading: Luke 7:36–50**

##### A Sinful Woman Forgiven

<sup>36</sup>One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table.

<sup>37</sup>And behold, a woman of the city, who

was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment,<sup>38</sup> and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.<sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."<sup>40</sup> And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."

<sup>41</sup>"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.<sup>42</sup> When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?"<sup>43</sup> Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly."<sup>44</sup> Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.<sup>45</sup> You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet.<sup>46</sup> You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.<sup>47</sup> Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."<sup>48</sup> And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."<sup>49</sup> Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?"<sup>50</sup> And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

## Writing

We do not receive forgiveness of sins because of love for God, even though this must follow. . . . For example, in Luke 7:47, Christ says, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much." Christ Himself interprets this when He adds, "Your faith has saved you" [7:50]. Christ did not mean that the woman had merited forgiveness of sins by that work of love. That is why He adds, "Your faith has saved you." But faith is that which freely obtains God's mercy because of God's Word. If anyone denies that this is faith, he does not understand at all what faith is. The story in this passage shows what Christ calls "love." The woman came with the opinion that forgiveness of sins should be sought in Christ. This worship is the highest worship of Christ. She could think nothing greater about Christ. To seek forgiveness of sins from Him was truly to acknowledge the Messiah. To think of Christ this way, to worship Him this way, to embrace Him this way, is truly to believe. Furthermore, Christ used the word *love* not toward the woman, but against the Pharisee. He contrasted the entire worship of the Pharisee with the entire worship offered by the woman. He rebuked the Pharisee because he did not acknowledge that He was the Messiah, even though he performed the outward duties that a guest and a great and holy man deserved. Christ points to the woman and praises her worship, ointment, tears, and so forth. These were all signs of faith and a confession—with Christ she sought forgiveness of sins. It is indeed a great example. . . . Christ shows that it is disgraceful for the Pharisee. While an unlearned woman believes God, he, a doctor of the Law, does not believe. He does not

acknowledge the Messiah and does not seek from Him forgiveness of sins and salvation. So Christ praises her entire worship.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 30[151]–33[154]

### Hymnody

Thou knowest all my griefs and fears,  
Thy grace abused, my misspent years;  
Yet now to Thee with contrite tears,  
Christ crucified, I come.

—Drawn to the Cross Which Thou  
Hast Blessed (*LSB* 560:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us Your gifts of faith, hope, and love that we may receive the forgiveness You have promised and love what You have commanded; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C64)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
VII 91–103

## THURSDAY—EASTER 3

### Psalmody

<sup>145</sup> With my whole heart I cry;  
answer me, | O LORD!\*

I will keep your | statutes.

<sup>146</sup> I call to you; | save me,\*  
that I may observe your testi- | monies.

<sup>147</sup> I rise before dawn and | cry for help;\*  
I hope | in your words.

<sup>148</sup> My eyes are awake before the  
watches | of the night,\*  
that I may meditate on your | promise.

<sup>149</sup> Hear my voice according to  
your | steadfast love;\*  
O LORD, according to your  
justice | give me life.

<sup>150</sup> They draw near who persecute me  
with evil | purpose,\*  
they are far | from your law.

<sup>151</sup> But you are near, | O LORD,\*  
and all your command- | ments are true.

<sup>152</sup> Long have I known from  
your testi- | monies\*  
that you have founded them for- | ever.  
—Psalm 119:145–152

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 20*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 38:21–39:8, 22–23, 27–31

Materials for the Tabernacle

<sup>21</sup>These are the records of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were recorded at the commandment of Moses, the responsibility of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. <sup>22</sup>Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses; <sup>23</sup>and with him was Oholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and designer and embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen.

<sup>24</sup>All the gold that was used for the work, in all the construction of the sanctuary, the gold from the offering, was twenty-nine talents and 730 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary. <sup>25</sup>The silver from those of

the congregation who were recorded was a hundred talents and 1,775 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary: <sup>26</sup>a beka a head (that is, half a shekel, by the shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone who was listed in the records, from twenty years old and upward, for 603,550 men. <sup>27</sup>The hundred talents of silver were for casting the bases of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil; a hundred bases for the hundred talents, a talent a base. <sup>28</sup>And of the 1,775 shekels he made hooks for the pillars and overlaid their capitals and made fillets for them. <sup>29</sup>The bronze that was offered was seventy talents and 2,400 shekels; <sup>30</sup>with it he made the bases for the entrance of the tent of meeting, the bronze altar and the bronze grating for it and all the utensils of the altar, <sup>31</sup>the bases around the court, and the bases of the gate of the court, all the pegs of the tabernacle, and all the pegs around the court.

Making the Priestly Garments

<sup>39:1</sup>From the blue and purple and scarlet yarns they made finely woven garments, for ministering in the Holy Place. They made the holy garments for Aaron, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

<sup>2</sup>He made the ephod of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. <sup>3</sup>And they hammered out gold leaf, and he cut it into threads to work into the blue and purple and the scarlet yarns, and into the fine twined linen, in skilled design. <sup>4</sup>They made for the ephod attaching shoulder pieces, joined to it at its two edges. <sup>5</sup>And the skillfully woven band on it was of one piece with it and made like it, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

<sup>6</sup>They made the onyx stones, enclosed in settings of gold filigree, and engraved like

the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the sons of Israel. <sup>7</sup>And he set them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod to be stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

<sup>8</sup>He made the breastpiece, in skilled work, in the style of the ephod, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. . . .

<sup>22</sup>He also made the robe of the ephod woven all of blue, <sup>23</sup>and the opening of the robe in it was like the opening in a garment, with a binding around the opening, so that it might not tear. . . .

<sup>27</sup>They also made the coats, woven of fine linen, for Aaron and his sons, <sup>28</sup>and the turban of fine linen, and the caps of fine linen, and the linen undergarments of fine twined linen, <sup>29</sup>and the sash of fine twined linen and of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, embroidered with needlework, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

<sup>30</sup>They made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet, "Holy to the LORD." <sup>31</sup>And they tied to it a cord of blue to fasten it on the turban above, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

**New Testament Reading: Luke 8:1–21**

Women Accompanying Jesus

<sup>1</sup>Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, <sup>2</sup>and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, <sup>3</sup>and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.

#### The Parable of the Sower

<sup>4</sup>And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: <sup>5</sup>“A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. <sup>6</sup>And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. <sup>7</sup>And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. <sup>8</sup>And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said these things, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

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#### The Purpose of the Parables

<sup>9</sup>And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, <sup>10</sup>he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ <sup>11</sup>Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. <sup>12</sup>The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they

may not believe and be saved. <sup>13</sup>And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. <sup>14</sup>And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. <sup>15</sup>As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

#### A Lamp Under a Jar

<sup>16</sup>“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. <sup>17</sup>For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. <sup>18</sup>Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

#### Jesus' Mother and Brothers

<sup>19</sup>Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. <sup>20</sup>And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” <sup>21</sup>But he answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

#### Writing

Lord, heavenly Father, if we must fall into sin, let us fall into any other sin, but deliver us from a hardening of the heart, and keep us in and with him whom you appointed Lord over sin and innocence. If we do not deny him or lose sight of him, all sin, death, and

hell will not harm us. Yes, what is there that might harm us?

Still we must thank God with all our heart that he still permits us to see him, as though he did not yet contemplate the withdrawal of his word, so that he has given you and others a spirit not offended by his word and a love for it. This is attested by the fact that you do not believe because of men but because of the word itself. . . .

Therefore our concern now must be to be grateful to the Father of all mercy and consolation and to see to it that our faith henceforth does not consist in words but in power. For St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3 [4:20], “The kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.” Our ability to speak or write eloquently about it is not sufficient; rather must our lives and our deeds testify to the truth, as we demonstrate our love and bestow our works of kindness on friend and foe.

Thus we must pray first of all that God may impart more and more strength to us and our friends and let his dear child Jesus grow in our hearts from day to day that we may praise, glorify, and confess him with a zealous and happy heart.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

On what has now been sown  
 Thy blessing, Lord, bestow;  
 The pow’r is Thine alone  
 To make it sprout and grow.  
 Do Thou in grace the harvest raise,  
 And Thou alone shalt have the praise!  
 —On What Has Now Been Sown  
 (LSB 921:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, Sower of the Seed, the women supported You from their own means during Your ministry of releasing creation from its bondage. Give us strength to support the work of sowing the seed of Your forgiveness in the world through our almsgiving as we embody in our lives Your mercy and charity; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1016)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 104–106

## FRIDAY—EASTER 3

### Psalmody

- <sup>23</sup> Some went down to the | sea in ships,\*  
 doing business on the great | waters;
- <sup>24</sup> they saw the deeds | of the LORD,\*  
 his wondrous works | in the deep.
- <sup>25</sup> For he commanded and raised  
 the | stormy wind,\*  
 which lifted up the waves | of the sea.
- <sup>26</sup> They mounted up to heaven; they went  
 down | to the depths;\*  
 their courage melted away in  
 their | evil plight;
- <sup>27</sup> they reeled and staggered like | drunken  
 men\*  
 and were at their | wits’ end.
- <sup>28</sup> Then they cried to the LORD  
 in their | trouble,\*  
 and he delivered them  
 from | their distress.

<sup>29</sup> He made the | storm be still,\*  
and the waves of the | sea were hushed.

<sup>30</sup> Then they were glad that the waters  
were | quiet,\*  
and he brought them to their  
desired | haven.

<sup>31</sup> Let them thank the LORD  
for his | steadfast love,\*  
for his wondrous works  
to the chil- | dren of men!

<sup>32</sup> Let them extol him in the congregation  
of the | people,\*  
and praise him in the assembly  
of the | elders.

—Psalm 107:23–32

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 115*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 39:32–40:16

<sup>32</sup>Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished, and the people of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did. <sup>33</sup>Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its utensils, its hooks, its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases; <sup>34</sup>the covering of tanned rams' skins and goatskins, and the veil of the screen; <sup>35</sup>the ark of the testimony with its poles and the mercy seat; <sup>36</sup>the table with all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; <sup>37</sup>the lampstand of pure gold and its lamps with the lamps set and all its utensils, and the oil for the light; <sup>38</sup>the golden altar, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the entrance of the tent; <sup>39</sup>the bronze altar, and its grating of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the basin and its stand; <sup>40</sup>the hangings of the court, its pillars, and its bases, and the screen for the gate of

the court, its cords, and its pegs; and all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; <sup>41</sup>the finely worked garments for ministering in the Holy Place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons for their service as priests. <sup>42</sup>According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the people of Israel had done all the work. <sup>43</sup>And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, so had they done it. Then Moses blessed them.

The Tabernacle Erected

<sup>40:1</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
<sup>2</sup>“On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. <sup>3</sup>And you shall put in it the ark of the testimony, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. <sup>4</sup>And you shall bring in the table and arrange it, and you shall bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. <sup>5</sup>And you shall put the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. <sup>6</sup>You shall set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, <sup>7</sup>and place the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. <sup>8</sup>And you shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen for the gate of the court.

<sup>9</sup>“Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture, so that it may become holy. <sup>10</sup>You shall also anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, so that the altar may become most holy. <sup>11</sup>You shall also anoint the basin and its stand, and consecrate it.

<sup>12</sup>Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to

the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall wash them with water <sup>13</sup>and put on Aaron the holy garments. And you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. <sup>14</sup>You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, <sup>15</sup>and anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may serve me as priests. And their anointing shall admit them to a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations.”

<sup>16</sup>This Moses did; according to all that the LORD commanded him, so he did.

### New Testament Reading: Luke 8:22–39

Jesus Calms a Storm

<sup>22</sup>One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” So they set out, <sup>23</sup>and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. <sup>24</sup>And they went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. <sup>25</sup>He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?”

Jesus Heals a Man with a Demon

<sup>26</sup>Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup>When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. <sup>28</sup>When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with

me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” <sup>29</sup>For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) <sup>30</sup>Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup>And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. <sup>32</sup>Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup>Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

<sup>34</sup>When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup>Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. <sup>36</sup>And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. <sup>37</sup>Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. <sup>38</sup>The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup>“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

## Writing

Yet there is need that this truth about spiritual fatherhood also be taught to the people. For those who want to be Christians are obliged in God's sight to think them worthy of double honor who minister to their souls [1 Timothy 5:17–18]. They are obligated to deal well with them and provide for them. For that reason, God is willing to bless you enough and will not let you run out. But in this matter everyone refuses to be generous and resists. All are afraid that they will perish from bodily needs and cannot now support one respectable preacher, where formerly they filled ten potbellies. Because of this, we also deserve for God to deprive us of His Word and blessing and to allow preachers of lies to arise again and lead us to the devil. In addition, they will drain our sweat and blood.

But those who keep God's will and commandment in sight have this promise: everything they give to temporal and spiritual fathers, and whatever they do to honor them, shall be richly repaid to them. They will not have bread, clothing, and money for a year or two, but will have long life, support, and peace. They shall be eternally rich and blessed. So just do what is your duty. Let God manage how He will support you and provide enough for you. Since He has promised it and has never lied yet, He will not be found lying to you [Titus 1:2].

—Large Catechism I 161–165

## Hymnody

Manifest in making whole  
Palsied limbs and fainting soul;  
Manifest in valiant fight,  
Quelling all the devil's might;  
Manifest in gracious will,  
Ever bringing good from ill;  
Anthems be to Thee addressed,  
God in man made manifest.

—Songs of Thankfulness and Praise  
(LSB 394:3)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You have prepared for those who love You such good things as surpass our understanding. Cast out all sins and evil desires from us, and pour into our hearts Your Holy Spirit to guide us into all blessedness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
(C65)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 107–115

## SATURDAY—EASTER 3

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Blessèd is the one who consid- | ers  
the poor!\*

In the day of trouble the LORD  
de- | livers him;

<sup>2</sup> the LORD protects him and keeps him alive;  
he is called blessèd | in the land;\*  
you do not give him up to the will  
of his | enemies.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD sustains him on his | sickbed;\*  
in his illness you restore him  
to | full health.

<sup>11</sup>By this I know that you de- | light in me:\*  
my enemy will not shout  
in triumph | over me.

<sup>12</sup>But you have upheld me because  
of my in- | tegrity,\*  
and set me in your presence for- | ever.

<sup>13</sup>Blessèd be the LORD, the God of | Israel,\*  
from everlasting to everlasting! Amen  
and | Amen.

—Psalm 41:1–3, 11–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 76*

### Old Testament Reading: Exodus 40:17–38

[The Tabernacle Erected]

<sup>17</sup>In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. <sup>18</sup>Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. <sup>19</sup>And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>20</sup>He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. <sup>21</sup>And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>22</sup>He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, <sup>23</sup>and arranged the bread on it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>24</sup>He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, <sup>25</sup>and set up the lamps before the LORD, as the

LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>26</sup>He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, <sup>27</sup>and burned fragrant incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>28</sup>He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle. <sup>29</sup>And he set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>30</sup>He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, <sup>31</sup>with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. <sup>32</sup>When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, as the LORD commanded Moses. <sup>33</sup>And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work.

The Glory of the LORD

<sup>34</sup>Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. <sup>35</sup>And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. <sup>36</sup>Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. <sup>37</sup>But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. <sup>38</sup>For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.

*Additional Reading: Leviticus 1:1–7:38*

**New Testament Reading: Luke 8:40–56**

Jesus Heals a Woman and Jairus's Daughter

<sup>40</sup>Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. <sup>41</sup>And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, <sup>42</sup>for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. <sup>43</sup>And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. <sup>44</sup>She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. <sup>45</sup>And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" <sup>46</sup>But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." <sup>47</sup>And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. <sup>48</sup>And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

<sup>49</sup>While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." <sup>50</sup>But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." <sup>51</sup>And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. <sup>52</sup>And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead

but sleeping." <sup>53</sup>And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. <sup>54</sup>But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." <sup>55</sup>And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. <sup>56</sup>And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

**Writing**

I feel there are especially necessary for me in this life two things without which its miseries would be unbearable. Confined here in this prison of the body I confess I need these two, food and light. Therefore, You [O Jesus] have given me in my weakness Your sacred Flesh to refresh my soul and body, and You have set Your word as the guiding light for my feet. Without them I could not live aright, for the word of God is the light of my soul and Your Sacrament is the Bread of Life.

These also may be called the two tables, one here, one there, in the treasure house of holy Church. One is the table of the holy altar, having the holy Bread that is the precious Body of Christ. The other is the table of divine law, containing holy doctrine that teaches all the true faith and firmly leads them within the veil, the Holy of holies.

Thanks to You, Lord Jesus, Light of eternal light, for the table of Your holy teaching which You have prepared for us by Your servants, the prophets and Apostles and other learned men.

Thanks to You, Creator and Redeemer of men, Who, to declare Your love to all the world, have prepared a great supper in which You have placed before us as food not the lamb, the type of Yourself, but Your own most precious Body and Blood, making all the faithful glad in Your sacred

banquet, intoxicating them with the chalice of salvation in which are all the delights of paradise; and the holy angels feast with us but with more happiness and sweetness.

—Thomas Kempis

### Hymnody

Jesus, my Redeemer, lives;  
Likewise I to life shall waken.  
He will bring me where He is;  
Shall my courage then be shaken?  
Shall I fear, or could the Head  
Rise and leave His members dead?

—Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense  
(LSB 741:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, You took our illnesses and bore our diseases, bringing hope to the sick and the dying. In Your death on the cross, You completed Your work of bearing all our burdens and on the third day showed us in Your resurrected body the firstfruits of the new creation. Heal us now by Your Word and Sacraments, and raise us up on the Last Day that we might live with You forever; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1018)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 116–123

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### Psalmody

<sup>4</sup>In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and | righteousness;\*  
let your right hand teach  
you | awesome deeds!

<sup>5</sup>Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's | enemies;\*  
the peoples fall | under you.

<sup>6</sup>Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of up- | rightness;\*

<sup>7</sup>you have loved righteousness and hated | wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your com- | panions;\*

<sup>8</sup>your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and | cassia.

—Psalm 45:4–8a

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 132*

### Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 8:1–13, 30–36

Consecration of Aaron and His Sons

<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

<sup>2</sup>“Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread.

<sup>3</sup>And assemble all the congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting.” <sup>4</sup>And Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the congregation was assembled at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

<sup>5</sup>And Moses said to the congregation, “This is the thing that the LORD has commanded to be done.” <sup>6</sup>And Moses

brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. <sup>7</sup>And he put the coat on him and tied the sash around his waist and clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him and tied the skillfully woven band of the ephod around him, binding it to him with the band. <sup>8</sup>And he placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim. <sup>9</sup>And he set the turban on his head, and on the turban, in front, he set the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD commanded Moses.

<sup>10</sup>Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. <sup>11</sup>And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them. <sup>12</sup>And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him. <sup>13</sup>And Moses brought Aaron's sons and clothed them with coats and tied sashes around their waists and bound caps on them, as the LORD commanded Moses. . . .

<sup>30</sup>Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and of the blood that was on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron and his garments, and also on his sons and his sons' garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

<sup>31</sup>And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the flesh at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and there eat it and the bread that is in the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it.' <sup>32</sup>And what remains of the flesh and the bread you shall burn up with fire. <sup>33</sup>And you shall not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for it will take seven days to ordain you. <sup>34</sup>As has been done

today, the LORD has commanded to be done to make atonement for you. <sup>35</sup>At the entrance of the tent of meeting you shall remain day and night for seven days, performing what the LORD has charged, so that you do not die, for so I have been commanded." <sup>36</sup>And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD commanded by Moses.

### **New Testament Reading: Luke 9:1–17**

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles

<sup>1</sup>And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, <sup>2</sup>and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. <sup>3</sup>And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. <sup>4</sup>And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. <sup>5</sup>And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." <sup>6</sup>And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

Herod Is Perplexed by Jesus

<sup>7</sup>Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, <sup>8</sup>by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. <sup>9</sup>Herod said, "John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see him.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

<sup>10</sup>On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. <sup>11</sup>When the crowds learned it, they followed

him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing. <sup>12</sup>Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, “Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place.” <sup>13</sup>But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” <sup>14</sup>For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” <sup>15</sup>And they did so, and had them all sit down. <sup>16</sup>And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. <sup>17</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

## Writing

[God] speaks with us through the ministry of men and in this manner conceals His majesty, which is dreadful and unbearable for us. But because the ministry is too lowly and familiar, the pastors themselves, in the first place, and then God Himself, are despised in the ministry and all but trodden underfoot. But there will come a time when God, who humbles Himself in this manner for the sake of our salvation, will display His majesty and crush the smug scorners. Therefore let us recognize His exceedingly great and incalculable gift: that He emptied Himself in this manner and took on human form. Let us not on this account despise the Word; but let us fall on our knees and honor

and prize the holy ministry through which God deigns to speak to us.

For we are truly that people. As Moses says about his Jews (Deut. 4:7), we have a God who draws near to us and dwells with us, since through your mouth He speaks with me and through my mouth He speaks with you. Yes, the Son of God Himself came down into the flesh and was made man for the sole purpose of drawing us unto Himself and in order that we might acquire hope in His mercy and not be afraid of Him as we shall be afraid of His majesty, which our nature cannot bear, as is written (Ex. 33:20): “Man shall not see Me and live,” and also (Deut. 4:24): “God is a devouring fire.” Therefore He assumed a weak form—a form like our own and for this reason completely human. We should not be afraid of it, just as we are not afraid of ourselves.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Lord Jesus Christ, You have prepared  
This feast for our salvation;  
It is Your body and Your blood,  
And at Your invitation  
As weary souls, with sin oppressed,  
We come to You for needed rest,  
For comfort, and for pardon.

—Lord Jesus Christ, You Have  
Prepared (*LSB* 622:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, merciful Father, since You have wakened from death the Shepherd of Your sheep, grant us Your Holy Spirit that when we hear the voice of our Shepherd we may know Him who calls us each by name and follow where He leads; through the same

Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L43)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
VII 124–128

## MONDAY—EASTER 4

### Psalmody

- <sup>129</sup> Your testimonies are | wonderful;\*  
therefore my soul | keeps them.
- <sup>130</sup> The unfolding of your | words gives light;\*  
it imparts understanding to the | simple.
- <sup>131</sup> I open my | mouth and pant,\*  
because I long for  
your com- | mandments.
- <sup>132</sup> Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me,\*  
as is your way with those  
who | love your name.
- <sup>133</sup> Keep steady my steps according  
to your | promise,\*  
and let no iniquity get  
dominion | over me.
- <sup>134</sup> Redeem me from man's op- | pression,\*  
that I may keep your | precepts.
- <sup>135</sup> Make your face shine upon your | servant,\*  
and teach me your | statutes.
- <sup>136</sup> My eyes shed | streams of tears,\*  
because people do not | keep your law.
- <sup>137</sup> Righteous are you, | O LORD,\*  
and right are your | just decrees.
- <sup>138</sup> You have appointed your testimonies  
in | righteousness\*  
and in all | faithfulness.  
—Psalm 119:129–138

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 96*

### Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 9:1–24

The LORD Accepts Aaron's Offering

<sup>1</sup>On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel, <sup>2</sup>and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a bull calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemish, and offer them before the LORD. <sup>3</sup>And say to the people of Israel, 'Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish, for a burnt offering, <sup>4</sup>and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil, for today the LORD will appear to you.' " <sup>5</sup>And they brought what Moses commanded in front of the tent of meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. <sup>6</sup>And Moses said, "This is the thing that the LORD commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD may appear to you." <sup>7</sup>Then Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."

<sup>8</sup>So Aaron drew near to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself. <sup>9</sup>And the sons of Aaron presented the blood to him, and he dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the horns of the altar and poured out the blood at the base of the altar. <sup>10</sup>But the fat and the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver from the sin offering he burned on the altar, as the LORD commanded Moses. <sup>11</sup>The flesh and the skin he burned up with fire outside the camp.

<sup>12</sup>Then he killed the burnt offering, and Aaron's sons handed him the blood, and he threw it against the sides of the altar. <sup>13</sup>And they handed the burnt offering to him, piece

by piece, and the head, and he burned them on the altar. <sup>14</sup>And he washed the entrails and the legs and burned them with the burnt offering on the altar.

<sup>15</sup>Then he presented the people's offering and took the goat of the sin offering that was for the people and killed it and offered it as a sin offering, like the first one. <sup>16</sup>And he presented the burnt offering and offered it according to the rule. <sup>17</sup>And he presented the grain offering, took a handful of it, and burned it on the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning.

<sup>18</sup>Then he killed the ox and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings for the people. And Aaron's sons handed him the blood, and he threw it against the sides of the altar. <sup>19</sup>But the fat pieces of the ox and of the ram, the fat tail and that which covers the entrails and the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver—<sup>20</sup>they put the fat pieces on the breasts, and he burned the fat pieces on the altar, <sup>21</sup>but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved for a wave offering before the LORD, as Moses commanded.

<sup>22</sup>Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. <sup>23</sup>And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. <sup>24</sup>And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

## New Testament Reading: Luke 9:18–36

Peter Confesses Jesus As the Christ

<sup>18</sup>Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" <sup>19</sup>And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." <sup>20</sup>Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

Jesus Foretells His Death

<sup>21</sup>And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, <sup>22</sup>saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus

<sup>23</sup>And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. <sup>25</sup>For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup>For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. <sup>27</sup>But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

The Transfiguration

<sup>28</sup>Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup>And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup>And behold, two men were

talking with him, Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup>who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup>Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. <sup>33</sup>And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. <sup>34</sup>As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup>And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” <sup>36</sup>And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

## Writing

Christ goes up onto the mountain, taking with Him three chosen disciples. He is transformed to such a surpassing and godlike brightness that His garments glitter with rays of fire and seem to flash like lightning. Moses and Elijah stand at Jesus’ side and speak with one another of the departure Jesus was about to accomplish at Jerusalem—the mystery of the dispensation in the flesh and of His precious suffering on the cross. For it is true that the Law of Moses and the word of the holy prophets foreshadowed the mystery of Christ by types and shadows, painting it, so to speak, as in a picture. Both the Law and the Prophets indicated that in due time Christ would appear in our likeness and, for the salvation and life of us all, consent to suffer death on the tree. Moses and Elijah standing before Jesus and talking with one

another is, therefore, a sort of representation. It excellently displays our Lord Jesus Christ as having the Law and the Prophets for His bodyguard, as being the Lord of the Law and the Prophets, and as being foreshadowed in them by those things that in mutual agreement they had proclaimed. For the words of the prophets are not at variance with the teachings of the Law. And this I imagine was what Moses, the most priestly, and Elijah, the most distinguished of the prophets, were talking about with each other. . . .

Besides the wonderful sight of Christ’s glory, something else was done that is useful and necessary for the confirmation of the disciples’ faith in Him—and not for the disciples only, but also for us. For a voice came from the cloud above, as from God the Father, saying: “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him! And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.” . . . Had it been God’s will that they should follow the commandments of Moses, God would have said, I suppose, “Obey Moses; keep the Law.” But this was not what God the Father said. In the presence of Moses and the prophets, God commands them rather to listen to Christ. The Evangelist has clearly indicated that the truth should not be subverted by anyone who claims that the Father told them to listen to Moses and not Christ, the Savior, by saying, “And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.” When God the Father commanded the holy apostles from the cloud overhead, saying, “Listen to Him,” Moses was far away. Elijah was also no longer near. Christ was there alone. It was Christ, therefore, that God commanded them to

obey. For Christ is the end of the Law and the Prophets.

—Cyril of Alexandria

### Hymnody

With Moses and Elijah nigh  
The incarnate Lord holds converse high;  
And from the cloud the Holy One  
Bears record to the only Son.

—O Wondrous Type! O Vision Fair  
(LSB 413:2)

### Prayer of the Day

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. (L21)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 1–6

## TUESDAY—EASTER 4

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>To you, | O LORD,\*  
I lift | up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust; let me  
not be | put to shame,\*  
let not my enemies exult | over me.

<sup>3</sup>Indeed, none who wait for you  
shall be | put to shame;\*  
they shall be ashamed who  
are wantonly | treacherous.

<sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, | O LORD;\*  
teach me | your paths.

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my sal- | vation,\*  
for you I wait all the | day long.

<sup>6</sup>Remember your mercy, O LORD,  
and your | steadfast love,\*  
for they have been | from of old.

<sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth or my  
trans- | gressions;\*  
according to your steadfast love  
remember me, for the sake of your  
goodness, | O LORD!

<sup>8</sup>Good and upright | is the LORD,\*  
therefore he instructs sinners | in  
the way.

<sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in | what is right,\*  
and teaches the humble | his way.

<sup>10</sup>All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love  
and | faithfulness,\*  
for those who keep his covenant and  
his testi- | monies.  
—Psalm 25:1–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 141*

### Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 10:1–20

The Death of Nadab and Abihu

<sup>1</sup>Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. <sup>2</sup>And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the LORD has said, ‘Among those who are near me I

will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.’” And Aaron held his peace.

<sup>4</sup>And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, “Come near; carry your brothers away from the front of the sanctuary and out of the camp.” <sup>5</sup>So they came near and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses had said. <sup>6</sup>And Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar his sons, “Do not let the hair of your heads hang loose, and do not tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the congregation; but let your brothers, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning that the LORD has kindled. <sup>7</sup>And do not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you.” And they did according to the word of Moses.

<sup>8</sup>And the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying, <sup>9</sup>“Drink no wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. <sup>10</sup>You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, <sup>11</sup>and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them by Moses.”

<sup>12</sup>Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his surviving sons: “Take the grain offering that is left of the LORD’s food offerings, and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy. <sup>13</sup>You shall eat it in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons’ due, from the LORD’s food offerings, for so I am commanded. <sup>14</sup>But the breast that is waved and the thigh that is contributed you shall eat in a clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you, for they are

given as your due and your sons’ due from the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the people of Israel. <sup>15</sup>The thigh that is contributed and the breast that is waved they shall bring with the food offerings of the fat pieces to wave for a wave offering before the LORD, and it shall be yours and your sons’ with you as a due forever, as the LORD has commanded.”

<sup>16</sup>Now Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it was burned up! And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the surviving sons of Aaron, saying, <sup>17</sup>“Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary, since it is a thing most holy and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? <sup>18</sup>Behold, its blood was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary. You certainly ought to have eaten it in the sanctuary, as I commanded.” <sup>19</sup>And Aaron said to Moses, “Behold, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and yet such things as these have happened to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the LORD have approved?” <sup>20</sup>And when Moses heard that, he approved.

*Additional Reading: Leviticus 11:1–15:33*

### **New Testament Reading: Luke 9:37–62**

Jesus Heals a Boy with an Unclean Spirit

<sup>37</sup>On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. <sup>38</sup>And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. <sup>39</sup>And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave

him. <sup>40</sup>And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” <sup>41</sup>Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.” <sup>42</sup>While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. <sup>43</sup>And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

#### Jesus Again Foretells His Death

But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, <sup>44</sup>“Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.” <sup>45</sup>But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

#### Who Is the Greatest?

<sup>46</sup>An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. <sup>47</sup>But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side <sup>48</sup>and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.”

#### Anyone Not Against Us Is For Us

<sup>49</sup>John answered, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.” <sup>50</sup>But Jesus said to him, “Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.”

#### A Samaritan Village Rejects Jesus

<sup>51</sup>When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

<sup>52</sup>And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. <sup>53</sup>But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup>And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” <sup>55</sup>But he turned and rebuked them. <sup>56</sup>And they went on to another village.

#### The Cost of Following Jesus

<sup>57</sup>As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” <sup>58</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” <sup>59</sup>To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” <sup>60</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” <sup>61</sup>Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” <sup>62</sup>Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

## Writing

Christ says: Remember, children, of what spirit you are, namely, of the Holy Spirit, who is a Spirit of peace, not of division. Peter forgot this in the garden, and was rebuked when Christ said to him: Put the sword into the sheath. The Christian Church does not require fighting, but suffering. The Holy Spirit permits it now, and maintains his silence that Christ is thus crucified and abominably dealt with. Because we have the pure doctrine, it happens also to us that everything that is great in the world uses

power and might against this doctrine. But God alone upholds His doctrine, else it would have been destroyed long ago. . . . But since they vilify the doctrine and defend their godless estate, we cannot hold silence, but must speak against them. In this we are like John and James, and in our heart desire revenge upon the godless tyrants. . . . Here everyone should repent thoroughly and pray God that He would keep us from such murderous thoughts. We should not desire revenge, but have compassion, and remember why the Son of Man is come, namely, that we should not desire judgment and revenge upon the sinners.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Who is sweeter than Christ Jesus?  
No good thing in Him I lack!  
Hand to plow, at peace I follow  
Where He leads me . . . why look back?  
—All for Christ I Have Forsaken  
(LSB 753:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord of all power and might, author and giver of all good things, graft into our hearts the love of Your name and nourish us with all goodness that we may love and serve our neighbor; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
(C66)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 7–15

## WEDNESDAY—EASTER 4

### Psalmody

- <sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD is perfect, reviv- | ing the soul;\*  
the testimony of the LORD is sure,  
making wise the | simple;
- <sup>8</sup>the precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing | the heart;\*  
the commandment of the LORD is pure,  
enlightening | the eyes;
- <sup>9</sup>the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring  
for- | ever;\*  
the just decrees of the LORD are true, and  
righteous alto- | gether.
- <sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold,  
even | much fine gold;\*  
sweeter also than honey and drippings of  
the | honeycomb.
- <sup>11</sup>Moreover, by them is your | servant  
warned;\*  
in keeping them there is | great reward.
- <sup>12</sup>Who can dis- | cern his errors?\*  
Declare me innocent from | hidden  
faults.
- <sup>13</sup>Keep back your servant also from  
presumptuous sins; let them not have  
dominion | over me!\*  
Then I shall be blameless, and innocent  
of great trans- | gression.
- <sup>14</sup>Let the words of my mouth and the  
meditation of my heart be acceptable | in  
your sight,\*  
O LORD, my rock and my re- | deemer.  
—Psalm 19:7–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 50*

## Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 16:1–24

The Day of Atonement

<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died, <sup>2</sup>and the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. <sup>3</sup>But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. <sup>4</sup>He shall put on the holy linen coat and shall have the linen undergarment on his body, and he shall tie the linen sash around his waist, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He shall bathe his body in water and then put them on. <sup>5</sup>And he shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

<sup>6</sup>“Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. <sup>7</sup>Then he shall take the two goats and set them before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>8</sup>And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Azazel. <sup>9</sup>And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the LORD and use it as a sin offering, <sup>10</sup>but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.

<sup>11</sup>“Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself.

<sup>12</sup>And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil <sup>13</sup>and put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, so that he does not die. <sup>14</sup>And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

<sup>15</sup>“Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. <sup>16</sup>Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses. <sup>17</sup>No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make atonement in the Holy Place until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel. <sup>18</sup>Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. <sup>19</sup>And he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it and consecrate it from the uncleannesses of the people of Israel.

<sup>20</sup>“And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present

the live goat. <sup>21</sup>And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness.

<sup>22</sup>The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness.

<sup>23</sup>“Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting and shall take off the linen garments that he put on when he went into the Holy Place and shall leave them there. <sup>24</sup>And he shall bathe his body in water in a holy place and put on his garments and come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people.”

### New Testament Reading: Luke 10:1–22

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-Two

<sup>1</sup>After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. <sup>2</sup>And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. <sup>3</sup>Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. <sup>4</sup>Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. <sup>5</sup>Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ <sup>6</sup>And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup>And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. <sup>8</sup>Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat

what is set before you. <sup>9</sup>Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ <sup>10</sup>But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup>‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ <sup>12</sup>I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Woe to Unrepentant Cities

<sup>13</sup>“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup>But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>15</sup>And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.

<sup>16</sup>“The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

The Return of the Seventy-Two

<sup>17</sup>The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” <sup>18</sup>And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup>Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. <sup>20</sup>Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Jesus Rejoices in the Father’s Will

<sup>21</sup>In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little

children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>22</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

### Writing

We are addressing people who regard God as a true God, who is truthful and does not lie, people who regard the apostles as His ambassadors and witnesses, as men who proclaim His Word and who must be heard as He Himself is heard. As Christ says (Luke 10:16): “ ‘He who hears you hears Me,’ and he who hears Me hears My Father.” Those are our *principia*, the bases and the chief article on which the entire Christian doctrine is founded. For all of Scripture asserts solely of that God and of His Son and apostles that their proclamation constitutes the right Word of God and that whoever believes this will be saved. If you deny all of that, I shall have nothing to do with you. For whoever denies God and His Word, His Baptism and Gospel, will not find it hard to deny the resurrection of the dead as well. If you dare to say that God is not God and that the apostles and Christendom do not teach and believe correctly, it is easy for you—and nothing seems better—to knock the whole bottom out of the barrel and say that there is no resurrection, neither heaven nor hell, neither devil nor death nor sin, etc. For what will you believe if you do not believe that God is something?

But if you choose to be numbered among those who regard God and His apostles, His Word and Christendom, as truthful, we shall indeed convince and constrain you to believe

also this article. For what Christendom believes and the apostles proclaim cannot be a lie. Thus it is also impossible for the apostles to be false witnesses of God; otherwise God would not be truthful and could not be God. Now that these *principia* stand, it follows logically and necessarily that you have to believe the resurrection of the dead, as surely as God is God. For He revealed the resurrection through His Son in Scripture and had it proclaimed through the apostles; and it was accepted and believed by Christendom. . . . It must be correct and true.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Enter, mighty Word, the field;  
Ripe the promise of its yield.  
But the reapers, oh, how few  
For the work there is to do!

—Spread the Reign of God the Lord  
(LSB 830:5)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You have built Your Church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. Continue to send Your messengers to preserve Your people in true peace that, by the preaching of Your Word, Your Church may be kept free from all harm and danger; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C67)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 16–22

## THURSDAY—EASTER 4

## Psalmody

<sup>7</sup>Wondrously show your | steadfast love,\*  
O Savior of those who seek refuge from  
their adversaries at | your right hand.

<sup>8</sup>Keep me as the apple | of your eye;\*  
hide me in the shadow | of your wings,

<sup>9</sup>from the wicked who do me | violence,\*  
my deadly enemies who sur- | round me.

<sup>10</sup>They close their hearts to | pity;\*  
with their mouths they  
speak ar- | rogantly.

<sup>11</sup>They have now surrounded | our steps,\*  
they set their eyes to cast us | to  
the ground.

<sup>12</sup>He is like a lion ea- | ger to tear,\*  
as a young lion lurking in | ambush.

<sup>13</sup>Arise, | O LORD!\*  
Confront him, sub- | due him!

Deliver my soul from the wicked by your  
sword, <sup>14</sup>from men by your hand, | O LORD,\*  
from men of the world whose  
portion is | in this life.

You fill their womb with | treasure;\*  
they are satisfied with children, and they  
leave their abundance to their | infants.

<sup>15</sup>As for me, I shall behold your  
face in | righteousness;\*  
when I awake, I shall be satisfied  
with your | likeness.

—Psalm 17:7–15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 89*

### Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 17:1–16

The Place of Sacrifice

<sup>1</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
<sup>2</sup>“Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all  
the people of Israel and say to them, This is

the thing that the LORD has commanded.

<sup>3</sup>If any one of the house of Israel kills an ox  
or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or kills it  
outside the camp, <sup>4</sup>and does not bring it to  
the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it  
as a gift to the LORD in front of the tabernacle  
of the LORD, bloodguilt shall be imputed to  
that man. He has shed blood, and that man  
shall be cut off from among his people. <sup>5</sup>This  
is to the end that the people of Israel may  
bring their sacrifices that they sacrifice in the  
open field, that they may bring them to the  
LORD, to the priest at the entrance of the tent  
of meeting, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of  
peace offerings to the LORD. <sup>6</sup>And the priest  
shall throw the blood on the altar of the  
LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting  
and burn the fat for a pleasing aroma to the  
LORD. <sup>7</sup>So they shall no more sacrifice their  
sacrifices to goat demons, after whom they  
whore. This shall be a statute forever for them  
throughout their generations.

<sup>8</sup>“And you shall say to them, Any one of  
the house of Israel, or of the strangers who  
sojourn among them, who offers a burnt  
offering or sacrifice <sup>9</sup>and does not bring it to  
the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it  
to the LORD, that man shall be cut off from  
his people.

Laws Against Eating Blood

<sup>10</sup>“If any one of the house of Israel or  
of the strangers who sojourn among them  
eats any blood, I will set my face against  
that person who eats blood and will cut him  
off from among his people. <sup>11</sup>For the life of  
the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it  
for you on the altar to make atonement for  
your souls, for it is the blood that makes  
atonement by the life. <sup>12</sup>Therefore I have said  
to the people of Israel, No person among you

shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood.

<sup>13</sup>“Any one also of the people of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who takes in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. <sup>14</sup>For the life of every creature is its blood: its blood is its life. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off. <sup>15</sup>And every person who eats what dies of itself or what is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or a sojourner, shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean. <sup>16</sup>But if he does not wash them or bathe his flesh, he shall bear his iniquity.”

### New Testament Reading: Luke 10:23–42

<sup>23</sup>Then turning to the disciples he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! <sup>24</sup>For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

<sup>25</sup>And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup>He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” <sup>27</sup>And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>28</sup>And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

<sup>29</sup>But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

<sup>30</sup>Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup>Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup>He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup>And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ <sup>36</sup>Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” <sup>37</sup>He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

Martha and Mary

<sup>38</sup>Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. <sup>39</sup>And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. <sup>40</sup>But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” <sup>41</sup>But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, <sup>42</sup>but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

## Writing

[Dr. Luther writes in his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians:]

We concede that good works and love must also be taught; but this must be in its proper time and place, that is, when the question has to do with works, apart from this chief doctrine. But here the point at issue is how we are justified and attain eternal life. To this we answer with Paul: We are pronounced righteous solely by faith in Christ, not by the works of the Law or by love. This is not because we reject works or love, as our adversaries accuse us of doing, but because we refuse to let ourselves be distracted from the principal point at issue here, as Satan is trying to do. So since we are now dealing with the topic of justification, we reject and condemn works; for this topic will not allow of any discussion of good works. On this issue, therefore, we simply cut off all laws and all works of the Law. [LW 26:137]

That's what Luther says.

Troubled hearts should have a firm, sure consolation. Also, due honor should be given to Christ's merit and God's grace. Therefore, the Scriptures teach that the righteousness of faith before God stands only in the gracious reconciliation or the forgiveness of sins, which is presented to us out of pure grace, only for the sake of the merit of the Mediator, Christ. This is received through faith alone in the Gospel promise. In the same way also, in justification before God, faith relies neither on contrition nor on love or other virtues. Faith relies on Christ alone and on His

complete obedience by which He has fulfilled the Law for us. This obedience is credited to believers for righteousness.

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord III 28–30

## Hymnody

How were Mary's thoughts devoted  
Her eternal joy to find  
As intent each word she noted,  
At her Savior's feet reclined!  
How kindled her heart, how devout was its  
feeling,  
While hearing the lessons that Christ was  
revealing!  
All earthly concerns she forgot for her Lord  
And found her contentment in hearing His  
Word.

—One Thing's Needful (*LSB* 536:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, in Your deep compassion You rescue us from whatever may hurt us. Teach us to love You above all things and to love our neighbors as ourselves; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C68)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 23–30

**FRIDAY—EASTER 4**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> Blessèd are those whose way is | blameless,\*  
 who walk in the law | of the LORD!
- <sup>2</sup> Blessèd are those who keep  
 his testi- | monies,\*  
 who seek him with their | whole heart,
- <sup>3</sup> who also | do no wrong,\*  
 but walk | in his ways!
- <sup>4</sup> You have commanded your | precepts\*  
 to be kept dil- | igently.
- <sup>5</sup> Oh that my ways may be | steadfast\*  
 in keeping your | statutes!
- <sup>6</sup> Then I shall not be | put to shame,\*  
 having my eyes fixed on  
 all your com- | mandments.
- <sup>7</sup> I will praise you with an | upright heart,\*  
 when I learn your just  
 and righ- | teous decrees.
- <sup>8</sup> I will keep your | statutes,\*  
 do not utterly for- | sake me!  
 —Psalm 119:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 116*

**Old Testament Reading:  
 Leviticus 18:1–7, 20–19:8**

**Unlawful Sexual Relations**

<sup>1</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
<sup>2</sup>“Speak to the people of Israel and say to  
 them, I am the LORD your God. <sup>3</sup>You shall  
 not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where  
 you lived, and you shall not do as they do in  
 the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing  
 you. You shall not walk in their statutes. <sup>4</sup>You  
 shall follow my rules and keep my statutes  
 and walk in them. I am the LORD your God.  
<sup>5</sup>You shall therefore keep my statutes and my

rules; if a person does them, he shall live by  
 them: I am the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>“None of you shall approach any one  
 of his close relatives to uncover nakedness.  
 I am the LORD. <sup>7</sup>You shall not uncover  
 the nakedness of your father, which is  
 the nakedness of your mother; she is  
 your mother, you shall not uncover her  
 nakedness. . . .

<sup>20</sup>“And you shall not lie sexually with  
 your neighbor’s wife and so make yourself  
 unclean with her. <sup>21</sup>You shall not give any of  
 your children to offer them to Molech, and  
 so profane the name of your God: I am the  
 LORD. <sup>22</sup>You shall not lie with a male as with  
 a woman; it is an abomination. <sup>23</sup>And you  
 shall not lie with any animal and so make  
 yourself unclean with it, neither shall any  
 woman give herself to an animal to lie with  
 it: it is perversion.

<sup>24</sup>“Do not make yourselves unclean  
 by any of these things, for by all these the  
 nations I am driving out before you have  
 become unclean, <sup>25</sup>and the land became  
 unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and  
 the land vomited out its inhabitants. <sup>26</sup>But  
 you shall keep my statutes and my rules and  
 do none of these abominations, either the  
 native or the stranger who sojourns among  
 you <sup>27</sup>(for the people of the land, who were  
 before you, did all of these abominations, so  
 that the land became unclean), <sup>28</sup>lest the land  
 vomit you out when you make it unclean,  
 as it vomited out the nation that was before  
 you. <sup>29</sup>For everyone who does any of these  
 abominations, the persons who do them  
 shall be cut off from among their people. <sup>30</sup>So  
 keep my charge never to practice any of these  
 abominable customs that were practiced  
 before you, and never to make yourselves  
 unclean by them: I am the LORD your God.”

## The LORD Is Holy

<sup>19:1</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
<sup>2</sup>“Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. <sup>3</sup>Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God. <sup>4</sup>Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>5</sup>“When you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted. <sup>6</sup>It shall be eaten the same day you offer it or on the day after, and anything left over until the third day shall be burned up with fire. <sup>7</sup>If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is tainted; it will not be accepted, <sup>8</sup>and everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned what is holy to the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from his people.”

**New Testament Reading: Luke 11:1–13**

## The Lord’s Prayer

<sup>1</sup>Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” <sup>2</sup>And he said to them, “When you pray, say:

“Father, hallowed be your name.  
 Your kingdom come.  
<sup>3</sup>Give us each day our daily bread,  
<sup>4</sup>and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.  
 And lead us not into temptation.”

<sup>5</sup>And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, <sup>6</sup>for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey,

and I have nothing to set before him’; <sup>7</sup>and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything?’ <sup>8</sup>I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. <sup>9</sup>And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. <sup>11</sup>What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; <sup>12</sup>or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup>If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

**Writing**

Whoever would be saved should not trouble or torment himself with thoughts about God’s secret counsel, about whether he also is elected and ordained to eternal life. Miserable Satan usually attacks with these thoughts and afflicts godly hearts. But they should hear Christ, who is the Book of Life, and hear about God’s eternal election to eternal life for all of His children. Christ testifies to all people without distinction that it is God’s will that all people should come to Him “who labor and are heavy laden” with sin, in order that He may give them rest and save them [Matthew 11:28].

According to Christ’s teaching they should abstain from their sins, repent, believe His promise, and entirely trust in Him. Since we cannot do this by ourselves, by our own powers, the Holy Spirit desires to work these

things—repentance and faith—in us through the Word and Sacraments. In order that we may receive this, persevere in it, and remain steadfast, we should beg God for His grace, which He has promised us in Holy Baptism. No doubt He will give it to us according to His promise, as He has said,

What father among you, if his son asks [him for bread, will give him a stone; or if he asks] for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him! (Luke 11:11–13)

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord XI 70–72

### Hymnody

Our Father, who from heav'n above  
Bids all of us to live in love  
As members of one family  
And pray to You in unity,  
Teach us no thoughtless words to say  
But from our inmost hearts to pray.

—Our Father, Who from Heaven  
Above (*LSB* 766:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, let Your merciful ears be attentive to the prayers of Your servants, and by Your Word and Spirit teach us how to pray that our petitions may be pleasing before You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C70)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
VIII 31–37

## SATURDAY—EASTER 4

### Psalmody

<sup>7</sup>How precious is your steadfast  
love, | O God!\*

The children of mankind take refuge  
in the shadow | of your wings.

<sup>8</sup>They feast on the abundance | of  
your house,\*

and you give them drink from the river  
of | your delights.

<sup>9</sup>For with you is the foun- | tain of life;\*  
in your light do | we see light.

<sup>10</sup>Oh, continue your steadfast love to those  
who | know you,\*  
and your righteousness  
to the up- | right of heart!

<sup>11</sup>Let not the foot of arrogance come  
up- | on me,\*  
nor the hand of the wicked  
drive | me away.

<sup>12</sup>There the evildoers lie | fallen;\*  
they are thrust down, unable | to rise.

—Psalm 36:7–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 39*

### Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 19:9–18, 26–37

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

<sup>9</sup>“When you reap the harvest of your  
land, you shall not reap your field right  
up to its edge, neither shall you gather the  
gleanings after your harvest. <sup>10</sup>And you shall

not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>11</sup>“You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. <sup>12</sup>You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

<sup>13</sup>“You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning. <sup>14</sup>You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>“You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. <sup>16</sup>You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. <sup>18</sup>You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. . . .

[You Shall Keep My Statutes]

<sup>26</sup>“You shall not eat any flesh with the blood in it. You shall not interpret omens or tell fortunes. <sup>27</sup>You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard. <sup>28</sup>You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves: I am the LORD.

<sup>29</sup>“Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute, lest the land fall into prostitution and the land become full of

depravity. <sup>30</sup>You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.

<sup>31</sup>“Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>32</sup>“You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

<sup>33</sup>“When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. <sup>34</sup>You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>35</sup>“You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity. <sup>36</sup>You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. <sup>37</sup>And you shall observe all my statutes and all my rules, and do them: I am the LORD.”

## New Testament Reading: Luke 11:14–36

Jesus and Beelzebul

<sup>14</sup>Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled. <sup>15</sup>But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons,” <sup>16</sup>while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven. <sup>17</sup>But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. <sup>18</sup>And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. <sup>19</sup>And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your

sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. <sup>20</sup>But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. <sup>21</sup>When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; <sup>22</sup>but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil. <sup>23</sup>Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

#### Return of an Unclean Spirit

<sup>24</sup>“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’

<sup>25</sup>And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. <sup>26</sup>Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.”

#### True Blessedness

<sup>27</sup>As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!” <sup>28</sup>But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

#### The Sign of Jonah

<sup>29</sup>When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, “This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. <sup>30</sup>For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. <sup>31</sup>The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something

greater than Solomon is here. <sup>32</sup>The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

#### The Light in You

<sup>33</sup>“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.

<sup>34</sup>Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. <sup>35</sup>Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. <sup>36</sup>If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”

#### Writing

It is an evangelical word and the sweetest comfort in every way for miserable sinners, where Ezekiel [Ezek. 18:23, 32] says: “I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn and live,” like Psalm 28[30:5]: “For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime.” Then there is Psalm 68[109:21]: “How sweet is thy mercy, O Lord” and “For I am merciful” [Jer. 3:12], and also Christ’s saying in Matthew 11[:28]: “Come unto me, all you who labor, and I will give you rest,” and that in Exodus 20[:6]: “I show mercy to many thousands, to those who love me.” What, indeed, does almost more than half of Holy Scripture contain but sheer promises of grace, in which mercy, life, peace, and salvation are offered by God to men? And what else do words of promise have to say but this: “I desire not the death of a sinner”? Is it not the same thing to say, “I am merciful,” as to say, “I am not angry, I

do not want to punish, I do not want you to die, I want to pardon, I want to spare”? And if these divine promises were not there to raise up consciences afflicted with the sense of sin and terrified with the fear of death and judgment, what place would there be for pardon or hope? . . . He does not say, “I desire not the sin of a man,” but, “I desire not the death of a sinner,” plainly showing that he is speaking of the penalty of sin, which the sinner experiences for his sin, namely, the fear of death. And he lifts up and comforts the sinner from his affliction and despair, so as not to quench the smoking flax and break the bruised reed [Isa. 42:3], but to give hope of pardon and salvation, so that he may rather be converted (by turning to salvation from the penalty of death) and live, that is, be at peace and happy with an untroubled conscience.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Christ, the devil’s might unwinding,  
Leaves behind His borrowed tomb.  
Stronger He, the strong man binding,  
Takes, disarms his house of doom;  
In the rout  
Casting out  
Pow’rs of darkness, sin, and doubt.

—All the Earth with Joy Is Sounding  
(LSB 462:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, You are the Stronger Man who plundered Satan’s house by casting out demons with Your finger and finishing him off by Your death on the cross. Blessed are those who hear Your Word and keep it by their works of mercy and charity as Satan falls like lightning from heaven when he sees

You in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1019)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 38–45

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Fret not yourself because of evil- | doers;\*  
be not envious of wrong- | doers!
- <sup>2</sup> For they will soon fade | like the grass\*  
and wither like the | green herb.
- <sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, | and do good;\*  
dwell in the land and  
befriend | faithfulness.
- <sup>4</sup> Delight yourself | in the LORD,\*  
and he will give you the  
desires | of your heart.
- <sup>5</sup> Commit your way | to the LORD;\*  
trust in him, and | he will act.
- <sup>6</sup> He will bring forth your  
righteousness | as the light,\*  
and your justice as the | noonday.
- <sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD and wait  
patiently | for him;\*  
fret not yourself over the one who  
prosper in his way, over the man  
who carries out evil de- | vices!
- <sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger, and for- | sake wrath!\*  
Fret not yourself; it tends only to | evil.
- <sup>9</sup> For the evildoers shall be | cut off,\*  
but those who wait for the LORD  
shall inher- | it the land.

—Psalm 37:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 150*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Leviticus 20:1–16, 22–27**

Punishment for Child Sacrifice

<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Say to the people of Israel, Any one of the people of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. <sup>3</sup>I myself will set my face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given one of his children to Molech, to make my sanctuary unclean and to profane my holy name. <sup>4</sup>And if the people of the land do at all close their eyes to that man when he gives one of his children to Molech, and do not put him to death, <sup>5</sup>then I will set my face against that man and against his clan and will cut them off from among their people, him and all who follow him in whoring after Molech.

<sup>6</sup>“If a person turns to mediums and necromancers, whoring after them, I will set my face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. <sup>7</sup>Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. <sup>8</sup>Keep my statutes and do them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you. <sup>9</sup>For anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood is upon him.

Punishments for Sexual Immorality

<sup>10</sup>“If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. <sup>11</sup>If a man lies with his father’s wife, he has uncovered his father’s nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. <sup>12</sup>If a man lies

with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed perversion; their blood is upon them. <sup>13</sup>If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. <sup>14</sup>If a man takes a woman and her mother also, it is depravity; he and they shall be burned with fire, that there may be no depravity among you. <sup>15</sup>If a man lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. <sup>16</sup>If a woman approaches any animal and lies with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. . . .

You Shall Be Holy

<sup>22</sup>“You shall therefore keep all my statutes and all my rules and do them, that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. <sup>23</sup>And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I detested them. <sup>24</sup>But I have said to you, ‘You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.’ I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. <sup>25</sup>You shall therefore separate the clean beast from the unclean, and the unclean bird from the clean. You shall not make yourselves detestable by beast or by bird or by anything with which the ground crawls, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. <sup>26</sup>You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.

<sup>27</sup>“A man or a woman who is a medium or a necromancer shall surely be put to death.

They shall be stoned with stones; their blood shall be upon them.”

### New Testament Reading: Luke 11:37–54

Woes to the Pharisees and Lawyers

<sup>37</sup>While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him, so he went in and reclined at table. <sup>38</sup>The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. <sup>39</sup>And the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. <sup>40</sup>You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? <sup>41</sup>But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.

<sup>42</sup>“But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>43</sup>Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. <sup>44</sup>Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it.”

<sup>45</sup>One of the lawyers answered him, “Teacher, in saying these things you insult us also.” <sup>46</sup>And he said, “Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. <sup>47</sup>Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. <sup>48</sup>So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. <sup>49</sup>Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,’ <sup>50</sup>so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation

of the world, may be charged against this generation, <sup>51</sup>from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation. <sup>52</sup>Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.”

<sup>53</sup>As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, <sup>54</sup>lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say.

### Writing

The prophets fought valiantly against [the] notion [that whatever was done with good intention was a good work and pleasing to God, even if these things had no command of God.] [They first] showed that it was useless for men to worship God by using the commandment and teachings of men, Is. 29:13. Therefore in Is. 59:4, 8, in regard to those who trust in their man-made worship, he makes the pronouncement: “They trust in vanity and speak lies; they conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity . . . they do not know the way of peace, and they have made crooked paths for themselves, and whoever walks in them shall not know peace,” cf. Zech. 7:5–6. Second, the prophets taught that men of this kind, who out of good intention had gone off on their own into their own forms of worship, were not serving God but the devil, Deut. 32:17, “They sacrificed to demons which were no gods, to gods they had never known”; cf. Ps. 106:37; Amos 5:25–26. Third, God also has shown by manifest punishments that He is provoked to wrath by worship of this kind. As Ps. 106:39 says, “They angered God by

their experimentations and He poured down ruin upon them.” As a result of this, Solomon was removed from his kingdom because he instituted worship outside of the Word of God. Afterwards the 10 tribes were carried off into endless captivity and the remaining two tribes were sent into a 70-year exile, because they wanted to worship God apart from and contrary to the Law which had been given to them.

In the New Testament Christ our Savior had several conflicts with the Pharisees concerning “the traditions of the elders.” For they devised several works which were not mandated by God, using as their excuse that it was a worship designed for righteousness and merit. In Matt. 15:1ff. Christ objects to them because they had made the commandment of God an empty thing by their traditions. He also cites Is. 29:13, “In vain do they worship Me, teaching the doctrines and traditions of men.” In Matt. 23:23 Christ raises the objection that they tithed of mint and anise and cummin, and meanwhile neglect the weightier points of the law. In v. 25 He criticizes them for “cleaning the cups and the platters but inside they are filled with extortion and uncleanness.” Therefore, He calls them back to the observance of the Law and leads them to the works commanded in the Decalog, Matt. 19:18ff., “You shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honor your father and your mother. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” In Matt. 22:37ff., He cites a brief summary of the whole Decalog, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your soul. This is the first and great

commandment. And the second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

Its light of holiness imparts  
The knowledge of our sinful hearts  
That we may see our lost estate  
And turn from sin before too late.

—The Law of God Is Good and Wise  
(LSB 579:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L45)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 46–52

## MONDAY—EASTER 5

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be | put to shame;\*  
in your righteousness de- | liver me!

<sup>2</sup> Incline your ear to me;  
rescue me | speedily!\*

Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong  
fortress to | save me!

<sup>3</sup>For you are my rock and my | fortress;\*  
and for your name's sake you lead  
me and | guide me;

<sup>4</sup>you take me out of the net they  
have hidden | for me,\*  
for you are my | refuge.

<sup>5</sup>Into your hand I commit my | spirit;\*  
you have redeemed me,  
O LORD, | faithful God.

—Psalm 31:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 25*

### Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 21:1–24

Holiness and the Priests

<sup>1</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: No one shall make himself unclean for the dead among his people, <sup>2</sup>except for his closest relatives, his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother, <sup>3</sup>or his virgin sister (who is near to him because she has had no husband; for her he may make himself unclean). <sup>4</sup>He shall not make himself unclean as a husband among his people and so profane himself. <sup>5</sup>They shall not make bald patches on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts on their body. <sup>6</sup>They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God. For they offer the LORD’s food offerings, the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy. <sup>7</sup>They shall not marry a prostitute or a woman who has been defiled, neither shall they marry a woman divorced from her husband, for the priest is holy to his God. <sup>8</sup>You shall sanctify him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I, the LORD, who sanctify you, am holy. <sup>9</sup>And the daughter of any priest, if she

profanes herself by whoring, profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire.

<sup>10</sup>“The priest who is chief among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil is poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not let the hair of his head hang loose nor tear his clothes.

<sup>11</sup>He shall not go in to any dead bodies nor make himself unclean, even for his father or for his mother. <sup>12</sup>He shall not go out of the sanctuary, lest he profane the sanctuary of his God, for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him: I am the LORD.

<sup>13</sup>And he shall take a wife in her virginity. <sup>14</sup>A widow, or a divorced woman, or a woman who has been defiled, or a prostitute, these he shall not marry. But he shall take as his wife a virgin of his own people, <sup>15</sup>that he may not profane his offspring among his people, for I am the LORD who sanctifies him.”

<sup>16</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>17</sup>“Speak to Aaron, saying, None of your offspring throughout their generations who has a blemish may approach to offer the bread of his God. <sup>18</sup>For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, <sup>19</sup>or a man who has an injured foot or an injured hand, <sup>20</sup>or a hunchback or a dwarf or a man with a defect in his sight or an itching disease or scabs or crushed testicles. <sup>21</sup>No man of the offspring of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall come near to offer the LORD’s food offerings; since he has a blemish, he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. <sup>22</sup>He may eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy things, <sup>23</sup>but he shall not go through the veil or approach the altar, because he has a blemish, that he may not profane my sanctuaries, for I am the LORD who sanctifies

them.”<sup>24</sup> So Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the people of Israel.

### New Testament Reading: Luke 12:1–12

Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees

<sup>1</sup>In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. <sup>2</sup>Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. <sup>3</sup>Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.

Have No Fear

<sup>4</sup>“I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. <sup>5</sup>But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! <sup>6</sup>Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. <sup>7</sup>Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Acknowledge Christ Before Men

<sup>8</sup>“And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, <sup>9</sup>but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. <sup>10</sup>And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. <sup>11</sup>And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you

should defend yourself or what you should say, <sup>12</sup>for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

### Writing

Let us be calmly confident in this cause which has to do with God’s word. Christ, whose cause it is, will staunchly defend and uphold it against the cunning of the vile devil and the tyranny of the wicked and deceitful world. For those who confess him before this evil and adulterous generation and must suffer much thereby, Christ in turn will confess them before his heavenly Father and requite them for their suffering with the delights of eternity [Matt. 10:32]. God himself says, I Samuel 2 [:30], “He who honors me, I will honor.” Even if the waves of the sea are strong and huge billows rise up and roar furiously as though they would drown us, the Lord is still on high and has begun a kingdom as wide as the world which he now rules and has decreed that it shall endure. He is greater, yes, almighty, and he will accomplish it. Amen. . . .

Therefore the only thing necessary for us to do is to believe and to pray most confidently in Christ’s name that God will give us strength, since he has erected his kingdom and this is his doing. It is he who without our help, counsel, thought, or effort has brought his kingdom forth and has advanced and preserved it to this day. I have no doubt that he will consummate it without our advice or assistance. Because “I know in whom I believe,” as St. Paul says [II Tim. 1:12], I am certain that he will grant me more, do far more abundantly, and help and counsel us beyond all that we ask or think [Eph. 3:20]. He is called the Lord who can

and will help in a wonderful, glorious, and mighty way, particularly when the need is the greatest. We are meant to be human beings, not divine. So let us take comfort in his word and, trusting his promise, call upon him confidently for deliverance in time of distress and he will help.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Fulfilled is all that David told  
In sure prophetic song of old,  
That God the nations' king should be  
And reign in triumph from the tree,

On whose hard arms, so widely flung,  
The weight of this world's ransom hung,  
The price of humankind to pay  
And spoil the spoiler of his prey.

—The Royal Banners Forward Go (*LSB*  
455:3–4)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, by Your Spirit, You give us faith to cast out all fear of confessing the true faith; for we are helpless to save ourselves, and we must trust in You and You alone for our salvation. Keep us faithful to the end, that You will not be ashamed of us when You come in Your glory with Your Father and the holy angels; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1019)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
VIII 53–60

## TUESDAY—EASTER 5

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>Unless the LORD builds the house, those  
who build it la- | bor in vain.\*

Unless the LORD watches over the city,  
the watchman stays a- | wake in vain.

<sup>2</sup>It is in vain that you rise up early and go late  
to rest, eating the bread of | anxious toil;\*  
for he gives to his be- | lovèd sleep.

<sup>3</sup>Behold, children are a heritage | from  
the LORD,\*  
the fruit of the womb | a reward.

<sup>4</sup>Like arrows in the hand of a | warrior\*  
are the children | of one's youth.

<sup>5</sup>Blessèd is the man who fills his  
quiver | with them!\*

He shall not be put to shame when he  
speaks with his enemies | in the gate.

—Psalm 127

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 92*

### Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 23:1–22

Feasts of the LORD

<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

<sup>2</sup>“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed feasts of the LORD that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts.

The Sabbath

<sup>3</sup>“Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work. It is a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwelling places.

The Passover

<sup>4</sup>“These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at the time appointed for them. <sup>5</sup>In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight, is the LORD’s Passover. <sup>6</sup>And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. <sup>7</sup>On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. <sup>8</sup>But you shall present a food offering to the LORD for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work.”

The Feast of Firstfruits

<sup>9</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>10</sup>“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, <sup>11</sup>and he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. <sup>12</sup>And on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the LORD. <sup>13</sup>And the grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, a food offering to the LORD with a pleasing aroma, and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin. <sup>14</sup>And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The Feast of Weeks

<sup>15</sup>“You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that

you brought the sheaf of the wave offering. <sup>16</sup>You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the LORD. <sup>17</sup>You shall bring from your dwelling places two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour, and they shall be baked with leaven, as firstfruits to the LORD. <sup>18</sup>And you shall present with the bread seven lambs a year old without blemish, and one bull from the herd and two rams. They shall be a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. <sup>19</sup>And you shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings. <sup>20</sup>And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. <sup>21</sup>And you shall make proclamation on the same day. You shall hold a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a statute forever in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.

<sup>22</sup>“And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.”

**New Testament Reading: Luke 12:13–34**

The Parable of the Rich Fool

<sup>13</sup>Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” <sup>14</sup>But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, “Take

care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." <sup>16</sup>And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, <sup>17</sup>and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' <sup>18</sup>And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup>And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' <sup>20</sup>But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' <sup>21</sup>So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

#### Do Not Be Anxious

<sup>22</sup>And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. <sup>23</sup>For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. <sup>24</sup>Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! <sup>25</sup>And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>26</sup>If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? <sup>27</sup>Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>28</sup>But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! <sup>29</sup>And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. <sup>30</sup>For all the nations of the world seek after these

things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup>Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

<sup>32</sup>"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup>Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup>For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

#### Writing

Many a person thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and possessions. He trusts in them and boasts about them with such firmness and assurance as to care for no one. Such a person has a god by the name of "Mammon" (i.e., money and possessions; [Matthew 6:24]), on which he sets all his heart. This is the most common idol on earth. He who has money and possessions feels secure [Luke 12:16–21] and is joyful and undismayed as though he were sitting in the midst of Paradise. On the other hand, he who has no money doubts and is despondent, as though he knew of no God. For very few people can be found who are of good cheer and who neither mourn nor complain if they lack Mammon. This care and desire for money sticks and clings to our nature, right up to the grave.

So, too, whoever trusts and boasts that he has great skill, prudence, power, favor, friendship, and honor also has a god. But it is not the true and only God. This truth reappears when you notice how arrogant, secure, and proud people are because of such possessions, and how despondent they are

when the possessions no longer exist or are withdrawn. Therefore, I repeat that the chief explanation of this point is that to “have a god” is to have something in which the heart entirely trusts.

—Large Catechism I 5–10

### Hymnody

O little flock, fear not the foe  
 Who madly seeks your overthrow;  
 Dread not his rage and pow’r.  
 And though your courage sometimes faints,  
 His seeming triumph o’er God’s saints  
 Lasts but a little hour.

—O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe  
 (LSB 666:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, grant us wisdom to recognize the treasures You have stored up for us in heaven, that we may never despair but always rejoice and be thankful for the riches of Your grace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C71)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 61–65

## WEDNESDAY—EASTER 5

### Psalmody

<sup>12</sup>What shall I render | to the LORD\*  
 for all his bene- | fits to me?

<sup>13</sup>I will lift up the cup of sal- | vation\*  
 and call on the name | of the LORD,

<sup>14</sup>I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
 in the presence of all his | people.

<sup>15</sup>Precious in the sight | of the LORD\*  
 is the death | of his saints.

<sup>16</sup>O LORD, I am your | servant;\*  
 I am your servant, the son of your  
 maidservant. You have | loosed  
 my bonds.

<sup>17</sup>I will offer to you the sacrifice  
 of thanks- | giving\*  
 and call on the name | of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
 in the presence of all his | people,

<sup>19</sup>in the courts of the house | of the LORD,\*  
 in your midst, O Jerusalem. | Praise  
 the LORD!

—Psalm 116:12–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 123*

### Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 23:23–44

The Feast of Trumpets

<sup>23</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
<sup>24</sup>“Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. <sup>25</sup>You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the LORD.”

The Day of Atonement

<sup>26</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
<sup>27</sup>“Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the LORD. <sup>28</sup>And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement

for you before the LORD your God. <sup>29</sup>For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people. <sup>30</sup>And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. <sup>31</sup>You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. <sup>32</sup>It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath.”

#### The Feast of Booths

<sup>33</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>34</sup>“Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the LORD. <sup>35</sup>On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. <sup>36</sup>For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work.

<sup>37</sup>“These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim as times of holy convocation, for presenting to the LORD food offerings, burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its proper day, <sup>38</sup>besides the LORD’s Sabbaths and besides your gifts and besides all your vow offerings and besides all your freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD.

<sup>39</sup>“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. <sup>40</sup>And you shall

take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. <sup>41</sup>You shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. <sup>42</sup>You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, <sup>43</sup>that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”

<sup>44</sup>Thus Moses declared to the people of Israel the appointed feasts of the LORD.

#### New Testament Reading: Luke 12:35–53

##### You Must Be Ready

<sup>35</sup>“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, <sup>36</sup>and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. <sup>37</sup>Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup>If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! <sup>39</sup>But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. <sup>40</sup>You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

<sup>41</sup>Peter said, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?” <sup>42</sup>And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household,

to give them their portion of food at the proper time? <sup>43</sup>Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>44</sup>Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. <sup>45</sup>But if that servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, <sup>46</sup>the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. <sup>47</sup>And that servant who knew his master’s will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. <sup>48</sup>But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

Not Peace, but Division

<sup>49</sup>“I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup>I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! <sup>51</sup>Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. <sup>52</sup>For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. <sup>53</sup>They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

## Writing

Nowhere is God more deeply covered and hidden than in the Passion. Gethsemane and the cry of dereliction on the cross

shatter every attempt to twist the Gospel into a triumphal epiphany of some savior-god in the manner of the ancient mystery religions, or into a heroic epic. How often the theology of glory has tried to control the Gospel! The miracles have been particularly misunderstood in this way. To be sure, Jesus “manifested His glory” in them, as we are told in the account of the wedding at Cana. But it says explicitly: “*His disciples* believed in Him.” Not the wedding guests, nor the five thousand whom He fed, nor the sick whom He healed, nor even those whom He raised from the dead believed in Him. Also these deeds were both a revealing and a covering of His divine majesty; only in faith did His disciples see His glory. His resurrection also was no demonstration for the world. The empty grave as such convinced no one who did not believe in Him. It could be explained away, as were also His miracles of healing (Matt. 27:64; Luke 11:28). Faith always deals with what is hidden. Also the faith of the apostles and of the apostolic church that Jesus is Lord was faith in His hidden glory, in God veiled in the flesh, in the true God in the form of true manhood. Nowhere, however, is this hiddenness more profound than in the cross.

—Hermann Sasse

## Hymnody

The Bridegroom soon will call us,  
 “Come to the wedding feast.”  
 May slumber not befall us  
 Nor watchfulness decrease.  
 May all our lamps be burning  
 With oil enough and more  
 That we, with Him returning,  
 May find an open door!

—The Bridegroom Soon Will Call Us  
 (LSB 514:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful Lord, cleanse and defend Your Church by the sacrifice of Christ. United with Him in Holy Baptism, give us grace to receive with thanksgiving the fruits of His redeeming work and daily follow in His way; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C73)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 66–70

## THURSDAY—EASTER 5

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Why do you boast of evil, O | mighty man?\*  
The steadfast love of God  
endures | all the day.
- <sup>2</sup> Your tongue plots de- | struction,\*  
like a sharp razor, you worker | of deceit.
- <sup>3</sup> You love evil | more than good,\*  
and lying more than  
speaking | what is right.
- <sup>4</sup> You love all words | that devour,\*  
O de- | ceitful tongue.
- <sup>5</sup> But God will break you down for- | ever;\*  
he will snatch and tear you from your  
tent; he will uproot you from the land  
of the | living.
- <sup>6</sup> The righteous shall | see and fear,\*  
and shall laugh at him, | saying,
- <sup>7</sup> “See the man who would not make God  
his | refuge,\*  
but trusted in the abundance of  
his riches and sought refuge in his  
own de- | struction!”

<sup>8</sup> But I am like a green olive tree in the | house  
of God.\*

I trust in the steadfast love of God forever  
and | ever.

<sup>9</sup> I will thank you forever, because  
you have | done it.\*

I will wait for your name, for it is good,  
in the presence of the | godly.

—Psalm 52

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 107*

## Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 24:1–23

The Lamps

<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

<sup>2</sup>“Command the people of Israel to bring  
you pure oil from beaten olives for the lamp,  
that a light may be kept burning regularly.

<sup>3</sup>Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent  
of meeting, Aaron shall arrange it from eve-  
ning to morning before the LORD regularly.  
It shall be a statute forever throughout your  
generations. <sup>4</sup>He shall arrange the lamps on  
the lampstand of pure gold before the LORD  
regularly.

Bread for the Tabernacle

<sup>5</sup>“You shall take fine flour and bake  
twelve loaves from it; two tenths of an ephah  
shall be in each loaf. <sup>6</sup>And you shall set them  
in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure  
gold before the LORD. <sup>7</sup>And you shall put pure  
frankincense on each pile, that it may go with  
the bread as a memorial portion as a food of-  
fering to the LORD. <sup>8</sup>Every Sabbath day Aaron  
shall arrange it before the LORD regularly; it  
is from the people of Israel as a covenant for-  
ever. <sup>9</sup>And it shall be for Aaron and his sons,  
and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is  
for him a most holy portion out of the LORD’s  
food offerings, a perpetual due.”

Punishment for Blasphemy

<sup>10</sup>Now an Israelite woman's son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel. And the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought in the camp, <sup>11</sup>and the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. Then they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. <sup>12</sup>And they put him in custody, till the will of the LORD should be clear to them.

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>14</sup>"Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. <sup>15</sup>And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. <sup>16</sup>Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

An Eye for an Eye

<sup>17</sup>"Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death. <sup>18</sup>Whoever takes an animal's life shall make it good, life for life. <sup>19</sup>If anyone injures his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, <sup>20</sup>fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him. <sup>21</sup>Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, and whoever kills a person shall be put to death. <sup>22</sup>You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native, for I am the LORD your God." <sup>23</sup>So Moses spoke to the people of Israel, and they brought out of the camp the one who had cursed and stoned him with stones. Thus the people of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

*Additional Reading: Leviticus 25:1–55*

**New Testament Reading:**  
**Luke 12:54–13:17**

Interpreting the Time

<sup>54</sup>He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming.' And so it happens.

<sup>55</sup>And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. <sup>56</sup>You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

Settle with Your Accuser

<sup>57</sup>"And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? <sup>58</sup>As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. <sup>59</sup>I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny."

Repent or Perish

<sup>13:1</sup>There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup>And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? <sup>3</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup>Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

### The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

<sup>6</sup>And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup>And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ <sup>8</sup>And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. <sup>9</sup>Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

### A Woman with a Disabling Spirit

<sup>10</sup>Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. <sup>11</sup>And there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. <sup>12</sup>When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your disability.” <sup>13</sup>And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. <sup>14</sup>But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” <sup>15</sup>Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? <sup>16</sup>And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” <sup>17</sup>As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

### Writing

The term *repentance* is not used in the Holy Scriptures in one and the same sense. In some passages of Holy Scripture it is used and taken to mean a person's entire conversion. For example, “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:5). And, “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:7). But in this passage (Mark 1:15) and elsewhere, when repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 20:21), or repentance and forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:46–47), are mentioned as distinct, *to repent* means nothing other than to truly acknowledge sins, to be heartily sorry for them, and to stop doing them. This knowledge comes from the Law. It is not enough for saving conversion to God if faith in Christ is not added. The comforting preaching of the Holy Gospel offers His merits to all penitent sinners who are terrified by the preaching of the Law. The Gospel proclaims the forgiveness of sins, not to coarse and self-secure hearts, but to the bruised or penitent (Luke 4:18). The preaching of the Gospel must be added so that the repentance may lead to salvation and not to the Law's contrition or terrors (2 Corinthians 7:10).

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord V 7–9

## Hymnody

Lo! He comes with clouds descending,  
 Once for ev'ry sinner slain;  
 Thousand thousand saints attending  
 Swell the triumph of His train:  
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
 Christ the Lord returns to reign.  
 —Lo! He Comes with Clouds  
 Descending (*LSB* 336:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath, rescue us from our hypocrisy, which keeps us from seeing You as the center of all of Scripture and acknowledging the present time as the time of salvation. Call us to repent of our self-righteousness so that we might look to You alone as the source of our life; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1021)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 71–76

## FRIDAY—EASTER 5

## Psalmody

<sup>33</sup>Teach me, O LORD, the way of your | statutes;\* and I will keep it | to the end.

<sup>34</sup>Give me understanding, that I may | keep your law\* and observe it with my | whole heart.

<sup>35</sup>Lead me in the path of your com- | mandments,\* for I de- | light in it.

<sup>36</sup>Incline my heart to your testi- | monies,\* and not to | selfish gain!

<sup>37</sup>Turn my eyes from looking at | worthless things;\* and give me life | in your ways.

<sup>38</sup>Confirm to your servant your | promise,\* that you | may be feared.

<sup>39</sup>Turn away the reproach | that I dread,\* for your just de- | crees are good.

<sup>40</sup>Behold, I long for your | precepts,\* in your righteousness | give me life!  
 —Psalm 119:33–40

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 81*

## Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 26:1–20

Blessings for Obedience

<sup>1</sup>“You shall not make idols for yourselves or erect an image or pillar, and you shall not set up a figured stone in your land to bow down to it, for I am the LORD your God. <sup>2</sup>You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.

<sup>3</sup>“If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, <sup>4</sup>then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. <sup>5</sup>Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And you shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land securely. <sup>6</sup>I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land. <sup>7</sup>You shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. <sup>8</sup>Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten

thousand, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. <sup>9</sup>I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you and will confirm my covenant with you. <sup>10</sup>You shall eat old store long kept, and you shall clear out the old to make way for the new. <sup>11</sup>I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. <sup>12</sup>And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. <sup>13</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves. And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

#### Punishment for Disobedience

<sup>14</sup>“But if you will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments, <sup>15</sup>if you spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my rules, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, <sup>16</sup>then I will do this to you: I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. <sup>17</sup>I will set my face against you, and you shall be struck down before your enemies. Those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when none pursues you. <sup>18</sup>And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins, <sup>19</sup>and I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. <sup>20</sup>And your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.”

#### New Testament Reading: Luke 13:18–35

##### The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

<sup>18</sup>He said therefore, “What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? <sup>19</sup>It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.”

<sup>20</sup>And again he said, “To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? <sup>21</sup>It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.”

##### The Narrow Door

<sup>22</sup>He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup>And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, <sup>24</sup>“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. <sup>25</sup>When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ <sup>26</sup>Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ <sup>27</sup>But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ <sup>28</sup>In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. <sup>29</sup>And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. <sup>30</sup>And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

Lament over Jerusalem

<sup>31</sup>At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup>And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.’ <sup>33</sup>Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’ <sup>34</sup>O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! <sup>35</sup>Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ”

**Writing**

According to the law of Moses no other images are forbidden than an image of God which one worships. . . . Concerning this I have a powerful passage in Lev. 26:1, “I am the Lord your God. You shall make for yourselves no idols and erect no graven image or pillar, and you shall not set up a figured stone in your land, to bow down to them.” . . . It is because of worship that idols and figured stones are forbidden. . . . Where they are not worshiped, they might well be set up and made. . . .

We have also an example of this in the Old Testament. For Joshua (Josh. 24 [:26]) set up a cairn at Shechem under an oak as a testimony. . . . However, because it was a stone of testimony, and not for worship, he did not do this against the commandment. Thereafter also Samuel (I Sam. 7 [:12]) set up a stone and called it Stone of Help. . . . But

because no worship but only remembrance was intended, he did not sin. . . .

No one is obligated to break violently images, even of God. . . . One is obligated, however, to . . . instruct and enlighten the conscience that it is idolatry to worship them, or to trust in them, since one is to trust alone in Christ. . . . Images for memorial and witness, such as crucifixes and images of saints, are to be tolerated. . . . And they are not only to be tolerated, but for the sake of the memorial and the witness they are praiseworthy and honorable. . . .

Now we do not request more than that one permit us to regard a crucifix or a saint’s image as a witness, for remembrance, as a sign. . . . Pictures . . . we would paint on walls for the sake of remembrance and better understanding. . . . It is, to be sure, better to paint pictures on walls of how God created the world, how Noah built the ark, and whatever other good stories there may be, than to paint shameless worldly things. Yes, would to God that I could persuade the rich and the mighty that they would permit the whole Bible to be painted on houses, on the inside and outside, so that all can see it. That would be a Christian work. . . .

God desires to have his works heard and read, especially the passion of our Lord. But it is impossible for me to hear and bear it in mind without forming mental images of it in my heart. For whether I will or not, when I hear of Christ, an image of a man hanging on a cross takes form in my heart. . . . If it is not a sin but good to have the image of Christ in my heart, why should it be a sin to have it in my eyes?

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

A multitude comes from the east and  
the west  
To sit at the feast of salvation  
With Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the blest,  
Obeying the Lord's invitation.  
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!  
—A Multitude Comes from the East  
and the West (*LSB* 510:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, You have called us to enter Your kingdom through the narrow door. Guide us by Your Word and Spirit, and lead us now and always into the feast of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C74)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
VIII 77–84

## SATURDAY—EASTER 5

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> O God, you are my God;  
earnestly I | seek you;\*  
my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints  
for you, as in a dry and weary land  
where there is no | water.
- <sup>2</sup> So I have looked upon you  
in the sanctu- | ary,\*  
beholding your power and | glory.
- <sup>3</sup> Because your steadfast love is  
bet- | ter than life,\*  
my lips will | praise you.
- <sup>4</sup> So I will bless you as long | as I live;\*  
in your name I will lift | up my hands.

<sup>5</sup> My soul will be satisfied as with fat  
and | rich food,\*

and my mouth will praise  
you with | joyful lips,

<sup>8</sup> My soul | clings to you;\*  
your right hand up- | holds me.

<sup>9</sup> But those who seek to de- | stroy my life\*  
shall go down into the depths | of  
the earth;

<sup>10</sup> they shall be given over to the  
power | of the sword;\*  
they shall be a portion for | jackals.

<sup>11</sup> But the king shall re- | joice in God;\*  
all who swear by him shall exult, for the  
mouths of liars | will be stopped.

—Psalm 63:1–5, 8–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 78*

## Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 26:21–33, 39–44

[Punishment for Disobedience]

<sup>21</sup>“Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, sevenfold for your sins. <sup>22</sup>And I will let loose the wild beasts against you, which shall bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock and make you few in number, so that your roads shall be deserted.

<sup>23</sup>“And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me, <sup>24</sup>then I also will walk contrary to you, and I myself will strike you sevenfold for your sins. <sup>25</sup>And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall execute vengeance for the covenant. And if you gather within your cities, I will send pestilence among you, and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. <sup>26</sup>When I break your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven and shall dole out your bread again by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied.

<sup>27</sup>“But if in spite of this you will not listen to me, but walk contrary to me, <sup>28</sup>then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline you sevenfold for your sins. <sup>29</sup>You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. <sup>30</sup>And I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars and cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols, and my soul will abhor you. <sup>31</sup>And I will lay your cities waste and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your pleasing aromas. <sup>32</sup>And I myself will devastate the land, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled at it. <sup>33</sup>And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste. . . .

<sup>39</sup>“And those of you who are left shall rot away in your enemies’ lands because of their iniquity, and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall rot away like them.

<sup>40</sup>“But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, <sup>41</sup>so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, <sup>42</sup>then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. <sup>43</sup>But the land shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them, and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes. <sup>44</sup>Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will

not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am the LORD their God.”

*Additional Reading: Numbers 1:1–2:34*

### **New Testament Reading: Luke 14:1–24**

Healing of a Man on the Sabbath

<sup>1</sup>One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. <sup>2</sup>And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. <sup>3</sup>And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” <sup>4</sup>But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. <sup>5</sup>And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?” <sup>6</sup>And they could not reply to these things.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

<sup>7</sup>Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, <sup>8</sup>“When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, <sup>9</sup>and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. <sup>10</sup>But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. <sup>11</sup>For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

### The Parable of the Great Banquet

<sup>12</sup>He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. <sup>13</sup>But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup>and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

<sup>15</sup>When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” <sup>16</sup>But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. <sup>17</sup>And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ <sup>18</sup>But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ <sup>19</sup>And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ <sup>20</sup>And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ <sup>21</sup>So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ <sup>22</sup>And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ <sup>23</sup>And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. <sup>24</sup>For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’ ”

### Writing

While they were going, the Lord “met them” and said, “Hail!” When he meets them, he does not frighten them with his power but comes before them with the ardor of his love. He does not startle them with his authority but greets them warmly. He binds them by the covenant of the bridegroom, not by the right of the ruler. He honors them with the love of a brother. He greets them with a gracious salutation. At one time he said to his disciples, “Salute no one on the road.” So why is it that here along the way this visitor is so quick to salute them? He does not wait to be recognized. He does not demand to be understood. He does not allow himself to be questioned. Rather, he extends this greeting immediately, enthusiastically. He did this because the force of his love overcomes and surpasses all. Furthermore, by doing so Christ himself greets the church. He makes its very heart to be his own and thus receives its body into his own, as the apostle says, “And he is the head of the body, the church.” This greeting itself evidently shows that the full figure of the church abides in these women. They are contrasted with those disciples whom Christ scolds who were wavering over the resurrection. He quells their fears by showing his side and the deep holes from the nails. By taking food, he now restores their faith.

—Peter Chrysologus

## Hymnody

To pastures green, Lord, safely guide,  
To restful waters lead me;  
Your table well for me provide,  
Your wounded hand now feed me.  
Though weary, sinful, sick, and weak,  
Refuge in You alone I seek,  
To share Your cup of healing.  
—Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread  
(LSB 625:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord of grace and mercy, teach us by Your Holy Spirit to follow the example of Your Son in true humility, that we may withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds avoid ungodly pride; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C75)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 85–87

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

## Psalmody

- <sup>13</sup>Your name, O LORD, endures for- | ever,\*  
your renown, O LORD, throughout  
all | ages.
- <sup>14</sup>For the LORD will vindicate his | people\*  
and have compassion on his | servants.
- <sup>15</sup>The idols of the nations are sil- | ver  
and gold,\*  
the work of | human hands.

- <sup>16</sup>They have mouths, but | do not speak,\*  
they have eyes, but | do not see;
- <sup>17</sup>they have ears, but | do not hear,\*  
nor is there any breath | in their mouths.
- <sup>18</sup>Those who make them be- | come  
like them,\*  
so do all who | trust in them!
- <sup>19</sup>O house of Israel, | bless the LORD!\*  
O house of Aaron, | bless the LORD!
- <sup>20</sup>O house of Levi, | bless the LORD!\*  
You who fear the LORD, | bless the LORD!
- <sup>21</sup>Blessèd be the LORD from | Zion,\*  
he who dwells in Jerusalem! | Praise  
the LORD!  
—Psalm 135:13–21

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 60*

## Old Testament Reading: Numbers 3:1–16, 39–48

The Sons of Aaron

<sup>1</sup>These are the generations of Aaron and Moses at the time when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. <sup>2</sup>These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. <sup>3</sup>These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he ordained to serve as priests. <sup>4</sup>But Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD when they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of Aaron their father.

Duties of the Levites

<sup>5</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>6</sup>“Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister to him. <sup>7</sup>They shall keep guard over him and over the whole congregation

before the tent of meeting, as they minister at the tabernacle. <sup>8</sup>They shall guard all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and keep guard over the people of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle. <sup>9</sup>And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the people of Israel. <sup>10</sup>And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall guard their priesthood. But if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death.”

<sup>11</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>12</sup>“Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the people of Israel. The Levites shall be mine, <sup>13</sup>for all the firstborn are mine. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the firstborn in Israel, both of man and of beast. They shall be mine: I am the LORD.”

<sup>14</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, <sup>15</sup>“List the sons of Levi, by fathers’ houses and by clans; every male from a month old and upward you shall list.” <sup>16</sup>So Moses listed them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded. . . .

<sup>39</sup>All those listed among the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron listed at the commandment of the Lord, by clans, all the males from a month old and upward, were 22,000.

#### Redemption of the Firstborn

<sup>40</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “List all the firstborn males of the people of Israel, from a month old and upward, taking the number of their names. <sup>41</sup>And you shall take the Levites for me—I am the LORD—instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all

the firstborn among the cattle of the people of Israel.” <sup>42</sup>So Moses listed all the firstborn among the people of Israel, as the LORD commanded him. <sup>43</sup>And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names, from a month old and upward as listed were 22,273.

<sup>44</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>45</sup>“Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle. The Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD. <sup>46</sup>And as the redemption price for the 273 of the firstborn of the people of Israel, over and above the number of the male Levites, <sup>47</sup>you shall take five shekels per head; you shall take them according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel of twenty gerahs), <sup>48</sup>and give the money to Aaron and his sons as the redemption price for those who are over.”

*Additional Reading: Numbers 4:1–8:4*

#### New Testament Reading: Luke 14:25–15:10

##### The Cost of Discipleship

<sup>25</sup>Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup>“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup>Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup>For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup>Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup>saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ <sup>31</sup>Or what king, going out

to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup>And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup>So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Salt Without Taste Is Worthless

<sup>34</sup>“Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? <sup>35</sup>It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

<sup>15:1</sup>Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup>“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? <sup>5</sup>And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup>And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ <sup>7</sup>Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

<sup>8</sup>“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently

until she finds it? <sup>9</sup>And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ <sup>10</sup>Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

**Writing**

We cheerfully hold the old traditions made in the Church for the sake of usefulness and peace. We interpret them in a more moderate way and reject the opinion that holds they justify. . . . Among us many use the Lord’s Supper every Lord’s Day. They do so after they have been first instructed, examined, and absolved. The children sing psalms in order that they may learn. The people also sing so that they may either learn or pray. . . . Among us the pastors and ministers of the churches are encouraged publicly to instruct and hear the youth. This ceremony produces the best fruit. . . . In our churches all the sermons are filled with such topics as these: repentance; the fear of God; faith in Christ, the righteousness of faith, the comfort of consciences by faith; the exercises of faith, . . . the cross . . . . From this condition of the churches it may be determined that we earnestly keep Church discipline, godly ceremonies, and good Church customs.

We teach this about the putting to death of the flesh and discipline of the body. Just as the [Augsburg] Confession states, a true and not a false putting to death [mortification] happens through the cross and troubles, by which God exercises us. In them we must obey God’s will, as Paul says, “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1). They are the spiritual exercises of fear and

faith. In addition to this putting to death, which happens through the cross, there is also a necessary, voluntary exercise. Christ says, “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation” (Luke 21:34). And Paul says, “I discipline my body and keep it under control” (1 Corinthians 9:27), and so on. These exercises are to be accepted not because they are services that justify, but because they are assumed to control the flesh, should overindulgence overpower us, and make us secure and unconcerned. This results in people indulging and obeying the tendencies of the flesh. This effort [at mortification] should be constant because it has God’s permanent command.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XV (VIII) 38, 40–41, 43–47

### Hymnody

Jesus sinners doth receive;  
Oh, may all this saying ponder  
Who in sin’s delusions live  
And from God and heaven wander!  
Here is hope for all who grieve:  
Jesus sinners doth receive.

—Jesus Sinners Doth Receive  
(LSB 609:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O merciful Lord, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all. Grant us courage and strength to take up the cross and follow Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C76)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
VIII 88–96

## MONDAY—EASTER 6

### Psalmody

- <sup>6</sup>The LORD works | righteousness\*  
and justice for all who | are oppressed.
- <sup>7</sup>He made known his ways to | Moses,\*  
his acts to the people of | Israel.
- <sup>8</sup>The LORD is merciful and | gracious,\*  
slow to anger and abounding  
in | steadfast love.
- <sup>9</sup>He will not | always chide,\*  
nor will he keep his anger for- | ever.
- <sup>10</sup>He does not deal with us according | to  
our sins,\*  
nor repay us according to  
our in- | iquities.
- <sup>11</sup>For as high as the heavens are a- | bove  
the earth,\*  
so great is his steadfast love toward those  
who | fear him;
- <sup>12</sup>as far as the east is | from the west,\*  
so far does he remove our  
transgres- | sions from us.
- <sup>13</sup>As a father shows compassion  
to his | children,\*  
so the LORD shows compassion to those  
who | fear him.
- <sup>14</sup>For he | knows our frame,\*  
he remembers that | we are dust.  
—Psalm 103:6–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 70*

## Old Testament Reading: Numbers 8:5–26

### Cleansing of the Levites

<sup>5</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Take the Levites from among the people of Israel and cleanse them. <sup>7</sup>Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: sprinkle the water of purification upon them, and let them go with a razor over all their body, and wash their clothes and cleanse themselves. <sup>8</sup>Then let them take a bull from the herd and its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you shall take another bull from the herd for a sin offering. <sup>9</sup>And you shall bring the Levites before the tent of meeting and assemble the whole congregation of the people of Israel. <sup>10</sup>When you bring the Levites before the LORD, the people of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites, <sup>11</sup>and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the people of Israel, that they may do the service of the LORD. <sup>12</sup>Then the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, and you shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering to the LORD to make atonement for the Levites. <sup>13</sup>And you shall set the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and shall offer them as a wave offering to the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>“Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the people of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. <sup>15</sup>And after that the Levites shall go in to serve at the tent of meeting, when you have cleansed them and offered them as a wave offering. <sup>16</sup>For they are wholly given to me from among the people of Israel. Instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the people of Israel, I have taken them for myself. <sup>17</sup>For all the firstborn among the people of Israel are mine, both of man and of beast. On the day that I struck

down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I consecrated them for myself, <sup>18</sup>and I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel. <sup>19</sup>And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the people of Israel, to do the service for the people of Israel at the tent of meeting and to make atonement for the people of Israel, that there may be no plague among the people of Israel when the people of Israel come near the sanctuary.”

<sup>20</sup>Thus did Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the people of Israel to the Levites. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, the people of Israel did to them. <sup>21</sup>And the Levites purified themselves from sin and washed their clothes, and Aaron offered them as a wave offering before the LORD, and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them. <sup>22</sup>And after that the Levites went in to do their service in the tent of meeting before Aaron and his sons; as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.

### Retirement of the Levites

<sup>23</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>24</sup>“This applies to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall come to do duty in the service of the tent of meeting. <sup>25</sup>And from the age of fifty years they shall withdraw from the duty of the service and serve no more. <sup>26</sup>They minister to their brothers in the tent of meeting by keeping guard, but they shall do no service. Thus shall you do to the Levites in assigning their duties.”

**New Testament Reading: Luke 15:11–32**

## The Parable of the Prodigal Son

<sup>11</sup>And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. <sup>14</sup>And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup>And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup>“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ <sup>20</sup>And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. <sup>24</sup>For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup>“Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup>And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ <sup>28</sup>But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, <sup>29</sup>but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ <sup>31</sup>And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’ ”

**Writing**

Our election to eternal life is founded not on our godliness or virtue, but on Christ’s merit alone and His Father’s gracious will. He cannot deny Himself [2 Timothy 2:13], because He is unchangeable in will and essence [Hebrews 6:17–18]. Therefore, when His children depart from obedience and stumble, He has called them to repentance again through the Word, and the Holy Spirit wants by the Word to be effective in them for conversion. When they turn to Him [Jeremiah 31:18–19] again in true repentance by a right faith, He will always show His old paternal heart to all who tremble at His Word and from their heart turn again to Him, as it is written:

If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her? Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; [yet return again to Me,] declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 3:1)

Furthermore, the declaration in John 6:44 is right and true, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." However, the Father will not do this without means, but has ordained His Word and Sacraments for this purpose as ordinary means and instruments. It is not the will of the Father or of the Son that a person should not hear or should despise the preaching of His Word and wait for the drawing of the Father without the Word and Sacraments. For the Father draws indeed by the power of His Holy Spirit. However, He works according to His usual way. He works by the hearing of His holy, divine Word, as with a net [Matthew 13:47-48], by which the elect are plucked from the devil's jaws. Every poor sinner should therefore attend to the Word, hear it attentively, and not doubt the Father's drawing. For the Holy Spirit will be with His Word in His power, and will work by it. That is the Father's drawing.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 75-77

## Hymnody

A feast of love for us You are preparing;  
We who were lost, You give an honored place!

"Come, eat; come, drink, and be no more despairing—

Here taste again the treasures of My grace."

—As Rebels, Lord, Who Foolishly  
Have Wandered (LSB 612:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, our heavenly Father, You stood afar off waiting to see Your prodigals appear at the gate. Then running to us, You overwhelmed us with grace and invited us to sit at table, to rejoice at our homecoming. Help us to repent of our sins and strip us of every thought that we might merit Your salvation. Then bring us home to be with You at the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1021)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord IX and X 1-4

## TUESDAY—EASTER 6

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> LORD, you were favorable | to your land;\*  
you restored the fortunes of | Jacob.

<sup>2</sup> You forgave the iniquity of your | people;\*  
you covered | all their sin.

<sup>3</sup> You withdrew | all your wrath;\*  
you turned from your hot | anger.

<sup>4</sup>Restore us again, O God of our  
sal- | vation,\*  
and put away your indignation | toward  
us!

<sup>5</sup>Will you be angry with us for- | ever?\*

Will you prolong your anger  
to all gener- | ations?

<sup>6</sup>Will you not revive | us again,\*  
that your people may re- | joice in you?

<sup>7</sup>Show us your steadfast love, | O LORD,\*  
and grant us your sal- | vation.  
—Psalm 85:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 18*

### Old Testament Reading: Numbers 9:1–23

The Passover Celebrated

<sup>1</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Let the people of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. <sup>3</sup>On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time; according to all its statutes and all its rules you shall keep it.” <sup>4</sup>So Moses told the people of Israel that they should keep the Passover. <sup>5</sup>And they kept the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the people of Israel did. <sup>6</sup>And there were certain men who were unclean through touching a dead body, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day, and they came before Moses and Aaron on that day. <sup>7</sup>And those men said to him, “We are unclean through touching a dead body. Why are we kept from bringing the LORD’s offering at its appointed time among the people of Israel?” <sup>8</sup>And Moses said to them, “Wait, that

I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you.”

<sup>9</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
<sup>10</sup>“Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If any one of you or of your descendants is unclean through touching a dead body, or is on a long journey, he shall still keep the Passover to the LORD. <sup>11</sup>In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight they shall keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. <sup>12</sup>They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break any of its bones; according to all the statute for the Passover they shall keep it. <sup>13</sup>But if anyone who is clean and is not on a journey fails to keep the Passover, that person shall be cut off from his people because he did not bring the LORD’s offering at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin. <sup>14</sup>And if a stranger sojourns among you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, according to the statute of the Passover and according to its rule, so shall he do. You shall have one statute, both for the sojourner and for the native.”

The Cloud Covering the Tabernacle

<sup>15</sup>On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony. And at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning. <sup>16</sup>So it was always: the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night. <sup>17</sup>And whenever the cloud lifted from over the tent, after that the people of Israel set out, and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the people of Israel camped. <sup>18</sup>At the command of the LORD the people of Israel set out, and at the command of the LORD they camped. As long as the cloud rested over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. <sup>19</sup>Even when the cloud

continued over the tabernacle many days, the people of Israel kept the charge of the LORD and did not set out. <sup>20</sup>Sometimes the cloud was a few days over the tabernacle, and according to the command of the LORD they remained in camp; then according to the command of the LORD they set out. <sup>21</sup>And sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning. And when the cloud lifted in the morning, they set out, or if it continued for a day and a night, when the cloud lifted they set out. <sup>22</sup>Whether it was two days, or a month, or a longer time, that the cloud continued over the tabernacle, abiding there, the people of Israel remained in camp and did not set out, but when it lifted they set out. <sup>23</sup>At the command of the LORD they camped, and at the command of the LORD they set out. They kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by Moses.

### New Testament Reading: Luke 16:1–18

The Parable of the Dishonest Manager

<sup>1</sup>He also said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. <sup>2</sup>And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’ <sup>3</sup>And the manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup>I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.’ <sup>5</sup>So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ <sup>6</sup>He said, ‘A hundred measures

of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ <sup>7</sup>Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ <sup>8</sup>The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. <sup>9</sup>And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

<sup>10</sup>“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. <sup>11</sup>If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? <sup>12</sup>And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own? <sup>13</sup>No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

The Law and the Kingdom of God

<sup>14</sup>The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

<sup>16</sup>“The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it. <sup>17</sup>But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.

## Divorce and Remarriage

<sup>18</sup>“Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.”

**Writing**

Make a reck'ning! Thund'rous word,  
Which e'en rocky cliffs split open,  
Word by which my blood grows frigid!  
Day of reck'ning! Soul, go forth!  
Ah, thou must God make repayment  
Of his blessings, life and body.  
Make a reck'ning! Thund'rous word!

All is but borrowed wealth  
That I through out my life am holding;  
Soul, being, will and blood  
And post and rank, all by my God are given;  
They are mine to care for  
And ever faithfully to manage,  
From lofty hands received in trust.  
Ah! Oh alas! I shake  
Whenever I my conscience enter  
And then in my accounts so many errors  
witness!

I have both day and night  
The many things which God hath lent me  
Indiff'rently consumed!  
How can I thee, O God of right, escape then?  
I cry aloud and weep:  
Ye mountains, fall! Ye hills, conceal me now  
From God's own wrathful judgment  
And from the flash of his own countenance!

Principal and interest also,  
These my debts, both large and small,  
Must one day be reckoned all.  
All for which I'm yet indebted  
Is in God's own book now written  
As in steel and adamant.

But yet, O frightened heart, live and despair  
thou not!

Step gladly 'fore the court!  
And if thy conscience should convict thee,  
Thou must be here constrained to silence;  
Behold thy guarantor,  
He hath all debts for thee released!  
It is repaid and fully wiped away  
What thou, O man, thy reck'ning art still  
owing;  
The lamb's own blood, O love most mighty!  
Hath all thy debt now canceled  
And thee with God hath settled.  
It is repaid, thy balance cleared!  
And meanwhile,  
Since thou know'st  
That thou a steward art,  
Thus be concerned and ever mindful  
That thou make prudent use of Mammon  
To benefit the poor;  
Thus shalt thou, when both time and life  
have ended,  
In heaven's shelter rest secure.

Heart, break free of Mammon's fetters,  
Hands now, scatter good abroad!  
Make ye soft my dying pallet,  
Build for me a solid house,  
Which in heaven ever bideth  
When earth's wealth to dust is scattered.

Make me strong with thy Spirit's joy,  
Heal me with thine own wounding,  
Wash me with thine own dying sweat  
In mine own final hours;  
And take me then, whene're thou wilt,  
In true believing from the world  
To thine own chosen people.

—Johann Sebastian Bach

## Hymnody

One thing's needful; Lord, this treasure  
Teach me highly to regard.  
All else, though it first give pleasure,  
Is a yoke that presses hard!  
Beneath it the heart is still fretting  
and striving,  
No true, lasting happiness ever deriving.  
This one thing is needful;  
all others are vain—  
I count all but loss that I Christ may obtain!  
—One Thing's Needful (*LSB* 536:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, keep Your Church in Your perpetual mercy; and because without You we cannot but fall, preserve us from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C78)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord X 5–12

## WEDNESDAY—EASTER 6

## Psalmody

<sup>5</sup> For God alone, O my soul, wait in | silence,\*  
for my hope is | from him.  
<sup>6</sup> He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my | fortress;\*  
I shall not be | shaken.  
<sup>7</sup> On God rests my salvation and my | glory;\*  
my mighty rock, my refuge | is God.

<sup>8</sup> Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart be- | fore him;\*  
God is a refuge | for us.

<sup>9</sup> Those of low estate are but a breath;  
those of high estate are a de- | lusion;\*  
in the balances they go up; they are  
together lighter | than a breath.

<sup>10</sup> Put no trust in extortion;  
set no vain hopes on | robbery;\*  
if riches increase,  
set not your | heart on them.  
—Psalm 62:5–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 19*

## Old Testament Reading: Numbers 10:11–36

Israel Leaves Sinai

<sup>11</sup>In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the cloud lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony, <sup>12</sup>and the people of Israel set out by stages from the wilderness of Sinai. And the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran. <sup>13</sup>They set out for the first time at the command of the LORD by Moses. <sup>14</sup>The standard of the camp of the people of Judah set out first by their companies, and over their company was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. <sup>15</sup>And over the company of the tribe of the people of Issachar was Nethanel the son of Zuar. <sup>16</sup>And over the company of the tribe of the people of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon.

<sup>17</sup>And when the tabernacle was taken down, the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari, who carried the tabernacle, set out. <sup>18</sup>And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out by their companies, and over their company was Elizur the son of Shedeur. <sup>19</sup>And over the company of the tribe of the

people of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. <sup>20</sup>And over the company of the tribe of the people of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

<sup>21</sup>Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things, and the tabernacle was set up before their arrival. <sup>22</sup>And the standard of the camp of the people of Ephraim set out by their companies, and over their company was Elishama the son of Ammihud. <sup>23</sup>And over the company of the tribe of the people of Manasseh was Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. <sup>24</sup>And over the company of the tribe of the people of Benjamin was Abidan the son of Gideoni.

<sup>25</sup>Then the standard of the camp of the people of Dan, acting as the rear guard of all the camps, set out by their companies, and over their company was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. <sup>26</sup>And over the company of the tribe of the people of Asher was Pagiel the son of Ochran. <sup>27</sup>And over the company of the tribe of the people of Naphtali was Ahira the son of Enan. <sup>28</sup>This was the order of march of the people of Israel by their companies, when they set out.

<sup>29</sup>And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the LORD has promised good to Israel." <sup>30</sup>But he said to him, "I will not go. I will depart to my own land and to my kindred." <sup>31</sup>And he said, "Please do not leave us, for you know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you will serve as eyes for us. <sup>32</sup>And if you do go with us, whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same will we do to you."

<sup>33</sup>So they set out from the mount of the LORD three days' journey. And the ark of the

covenant of the LORD went before them three days' journey, to seek out a resting place for them. <sup>34</sup>And the cloud of the LORD was over them by day, whenever they set out from the camp.

<sup>35</sup>And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, "Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you." <sup>36</sup>And when it rested, he said, "Return, O LORD, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel."

### New Testament Reading: Luke 16:19–31

The Rich Man and Lazarus

<sup>19</sup>"There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup>And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup>who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

<sup>22</sup>The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, <sup>23</sup>and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. <sup>24</sup>And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'

<sup>25</sup>But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. <sup>26</sup>And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' <sup>27</sup>And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—<sup>28</sup>for I have five brothers—so

that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’<sup>29</sup> But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’<sup>30</sup> And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’<sup>31</sup> He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’ ”

## Writing

What but the holy Church is figured by the ark? Consider how the four rings of gold in the four corners extended toward the four quarters of the globe, and by these it is declared undoubtedly to be equipped for journeying with the four books of the holy Gospel. Consider, too, the staves of shittim-wood that are made to be put through the same rings for carrying, because strong and persevering teachers, as incorruptible pieces of timber, are to be sought, who by cleaving ever to instruction out of the sacred volumes may declare the unity of the holy Church and, as it were, carry the ark by being let into its rings. For indeed to carry the ark by means of staves is through preaching to bring the holy Church before the rude minds of unbelievers by means of good teachers. And these are also ordered to be overlaid with gold, that, while they are resonant to others in discourse, they may also themselves glitter in the splendor of their lives. Of these sturdy staves it is added, “they shall always be in the rings, nor shall they ever be drawn out from them,” because it is surely necessary that those who attend upon the office of preaching should not recede from the study of Scripture. For to this end it is that the staves are ordered to be always in the

rings, that, when occasion requires the ark to be carried, no tardiness in carrying may arise from the staves having to be put in. But let the staves remain ever in the rings, that teachers, ever meditating in their own hearts the words of Holy Scripture, may lift without delay the ark of the covenant, teaching at once whatever is required.

—Gregory the Great

## Hymnody

Lord, let at last Thine angels come,  
 To Abr’ham’s bosom bear me home,  
 That I may die unfearing;  
 And in its narrow chamber keep  
 My body safe in peaceful sleep  
 Until Thy reappearing.  
 And then from death awaken me,  
 That these mine eyes with joy may see,  
 O Son of God, Thy glorious face,  
 My Savior and my fount of grace.  
 Lord Jesus Christ, my prayer attend, my  
 prayer attend,  
 And I will praise Thee without end.  
 —Lord, Thee I Love With All My  
 Heart (*LSB* 708:3)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You are the strength of all who trust in You, and without Your aid we can do no good thing. Grant us the help of Your grace that we may please You in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
 (C79)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
X 13–18

## THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

(Thursday—Easter 6)

Propers for Ascension, and the days  
that follow, for use with Matins and  
Vespers can be found on page 000.

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Out | of the depths\*

I cry to you, | O LORD!

<sup>2</sup> O Lord, | hear my voice!\*

Let your ears be attentive to the voice  
of my pleas for | mercy!

<sup>3</sup> If you, O LORD, should mark in- | iquities,\*

O Lord, | who could stand?

<sup>4</sup> But with you there is for- | givenness,\*

that you | may be feared.

<sup>5</sup> I wait for the LORD, my | soul waits,\*

and in his | word I hope;

<sup>6</sup> my soul waits for the Lord more than

watchmen for the | morning,\*  
more than watchmen for the | morning.

<sup>7</sup> O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the

LORD there is | steadfast love,\*  
and with him is plentiful re- | demption.

<sup>8</sup> And he will redeem | Israel\*

from all his in- | iquities.

—Psalm 130

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 47*

## Old Testament Reading: Numbers 11:1–23, 31–35

The People Complain

<sup>1</sup>And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes, and when the LORD heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. <sup>2</sup>Then the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire died down. <sup>3</sup>So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the LORD burned among them.

<sup>4</sup>Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, “Oh that we had meat to eat! <sup>5</sup>We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. <sup>6</sup>But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”

<sup>7</sup>Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium.

<sup>8</sup>The people went about and gathered it and ground it in handmills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil. <sup>9</sup>When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it.

<sup>10</sup>Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. <sup>11</sup>Moses said to the LORD, “Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? <sup>12</sup>Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,’ to the land that you swore to give their fathers?

<sup>13</sup>Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’ <sup>14</sup>I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. <sup>15</sup>If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.”

#### Elders Appointed to Aid Moses

<sup>16</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. <sup>17</sup>And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. <sup>18</sup>And say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, “Who will give us meat to eat? For it was better for us in Egypt.” Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. <sup>19</sup>You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, <sup>20</sup>but a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before him, saying, “Why did we come out of Egypt?”’ ” <sup>21</sup>But Moses said, “The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, and you have said, ‘I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!’ <sup>22</sup>Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?” <sup>23</sup>And the LORD said to

Moses, “Is the LORD’s hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not.” . . .

#### Quail and a Plague

<sup>31</sup>Then a wind from the LORD sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day’s journey on this side and a day’s journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the ground. <sup>32</sup>And the people rose all that day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail. Those who gathered least gathered ten homers. And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. <sup>33</sup>While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck down the people with a very great plague. <sup>34</sup>Therefore the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had the craving. <sup>35</sup>From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed to Hazeroth, and they remained at Hazeroth.

#### New Testament Reading: Luke 17:1–19

##### Temptations to Sin

<sup>1</sup>And he said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! <sup>2</sup>It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. <sup>3</sup>Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, <sup>4</sup>and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

### Increase Our Faith

<sup>5</sup>The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” <sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

### Unworthy Servants

<sup>7</sup>“Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table?’ <sup>8</sup>Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink?’ <sup>9</sup>Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? <sup>10</sup>So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”

### Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers

<sup>11</sup>On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup>And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance <sup>13</sup>and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” <sup>14</sup>When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. <sup>15</sup>Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; <sup>16</sup>and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup>Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? <sup>18</sup>Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup>And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

### Writing

God has given us Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and absolution to bring Christ very close to us, so that we can have Him not only in our heart but also on our tongue, so that we can feel Him, grasp Him, and touch Him. God did all this for the sake of those shameful spirits who seek God according to their own pleasure, with their reason and their own ideas and dreams. To make it possible for us to recognize Him, God presents Himself to us perceptively and clearly in signs. But we do not accept these; nor are we concerned about the divine Word, although Christ the Lord Himself says: “The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father who dwells in Me does His works” (John 14:10); again: “He who hears you hears Me” (Luke 10:16); and again: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation; he who believes the Word of God and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:15–16). But we utterly disregard such words of the Gospel as well as absolution. Thus we perceive God not only with our hearts but also with our eyes and our hands, for He gives us a tangible and visible sign of Himself. At all times God has so governed His people that He could also be recognized visibly by them, lest they say: “If it were possible to find God, we would roam to the ends of the earth in search of Him.” If you had ears to hear, it would be needless to wander far in search of God. For He wants to come to you, plant Himself before your very eyes, press Himself into your hands, and say: “Just listen to Me and take hold of Me, give Me eye and ear; there you have Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. Open your mouth, let Me place My hand on your head. I give you this water which I sprinkle over your head.”

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Increase my faith, dear Savior,  
For Satan seeks by night and day  
To rob me of this treasure  
And take my hope of bliss away.  
But, Lord, with You beside me,  
I shall be undismayed;  
And led by Your good Spirit,  
I shall be unafraid.  
Abide with me, O Savior,  
A firmer faith bestow;  
Then I shall bid defiance  
To ev'ry evil foe.

—I Know My Faith Is Founded  
(LSB 587:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into the heavens, so may we also ascend in heart and mind and continually dwell there with Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L47)

## The Ascension of Our Lord

Ascension Day is the coronation celebration of our Lord as He is proclaimed to be King of the universe. Jesus' ascension to the Father is His entrance to the greater existence beyond the confines of time and space, being no longer bound by the limitations of His state of humiliation. He now sits at the right hand of God, which Luther correctly taught is everywhere, having again taken up the power and authority that were His since before time. Yet our Lord is present with us who remain bound by time and space. He is with us as true God and true man, exercising His rulership in the Church through the means of grace which He

established: His Word and His Sacraments. We mortals in those means of grace can grasp the King of the universe and receive a foretaste of the feast to come.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord X 19–25

## FRIDAY—EASTER 6

## Psalmody

<sup>11</sup> I will remember the deeds | of the LORD,\*  
yes, I will remember your won- | ders  
of old.

<sup>12</sup> I will ponder | all your work,\*  
and meditate on your | mighty deeds.

<sup>13</sup> Your way, O God, is | holy.\*  
What god is great | like our God?

<sup>14</sup> You are the God who works | wonders;\*  
you have made known your might  
among the | peoples.

<sup>15</sup> You with your arm redeemed  
your | people,\*  
the children of Jacob and | Joseph.

—Psalm 77:11–15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 8*

## Old Testament Reading: Numbers 11:24–29; 12:1–16

[Elders Appointed to Aid Moses]

<sup>24</sup>So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. <sup>25</sup>Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him

and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

<sup>26</sup>Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. <sup>27</sup>And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” <sup>28</sup>And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, “My lord Moses, stop them.” <sup>29</sup>But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” . . .

Miriam and Aaron Oppose Moses

<sup>12:1</sup>Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. <sup>2</sup>And they said, “Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?” And the LORD heard it. <sup>3</sup>Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. <sup>4</sup>And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting.” And the three of them came out. <sup>5</sup>And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward. <sup>6</sup>And he said, “Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. <sup>7</sup>Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. <sup>8</sup>With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form

of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” <sup>9</sup>And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed.

<sup>10</sup>When the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. <sup>11</sup>And Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord, do not punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned. <sup>12</sup>Let her not be as one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother’s womb.” <sup>13</sup>And Moses cried to the LORD, “O God, please heal her—please.” <sup>14</sup>But the LORD said to Moses, “If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again.” <sup>15</sup>So Miriam was shut outside the camp seven days, and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again. <sup>16</sup>After that the people set out from Hazereth, and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

### New Testament Reading: Luke 17:20–37

The Coming of the Kingdom

<sup>20</sup>Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, <sup>21</sup>nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”

<sup>22</sup>And he said to the disciples, “The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. <sup>23</sup>And they will say to you, ‘Look, there!’ or ‘Look, here!’ Do not go out or follow them. <sup>24</sup>For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day.

<sup>25</sup>But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. <sup>26</sup>Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. <sup>27</sup>They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup>Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, <sup>29</sup>but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all—<sup>30</sup>so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. <sup>31</sup>On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. <sup>32</sup>Remember Lot's wife. <sup>33</sup>Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. <sup>34</sup>I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. <sup>35</sup>There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left.” <sup>37</sup>And they said to him, “Where, Lord?” He said to them, “Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”

## Writing

Now He has ascended to heaven, not merely as any other saint, but as the apostle testifies [Ephesians 4:10], above all heavens. He also truly fills all things, being present everywhere, not only as God, but also as man. He rules from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth, as the prophets predict [Psalm 8:1, 6; 93:1–4; Zechariah 9:10] and the apostles testify [Mark 16:20]. He did this everywhere with them and confirmed their word with signs. This did not happen

in an earthly way. As Dr. Luther explains, this happened according to the way things are done at God's right hand [LW 37:55–58; 37:228]. “God's right hand” is no set place in heaven, as the Sacramentarians assert without any ground in the Holy Scriptures. It is nothing other than God's almighty power, which fills heaven and earth. Christ is installed according to His humanity (in deed and truth), without confusing or equalizing the two natures in their essence and essential properties. By this communicated divine power, according to the words of His testament, He can be and is truly present with His body and blood in the Holy Supper. He has pointed this out for us by His Word. This is possible for no other man, because no man is united with the divine nature the way Jesus, the Son of Mary, is. No man is installed in such divine almighty majesty and power through and in the personal union of the two natures in Christ. For in Him the divine and the human nature are personally united with each other. So in Christ “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Colossians 2:9). In this personal union the two natures have such a grand, intimate, indescribable communion that even the angels are astonished by it. As St. Peter testifies, they have their delight and joy in looking into it (1 Peter 1:12).

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 27–30

**Hymnody**

Arise, O Christian people!  
 Prepare yourselves today.  
 Prepare to greet the Savior,  
 Who takes your sins away.  
 To us by grace alone  
 The truth and light were given;  
 The promised Lord from heaven  
 To all the world is shown.

—Arise, O Christian People (*LSB* 354:1)

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord Jesus, Your kingdom continues to be in our midst as You come to us now through holy water, holy words, and holy food. Help us to see that Your kingdom is a kingdom of suffering, but that through suffering, we will be prepared to enter into glory when You return on that final day; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1022)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord X 26–31

**SATURDAY—EASTER 6****Psalmody**

<sup>97</sup> Oh how I | love your law!\*

It is my meditation | all the day.

<sup>98</sup> Your commandment makes me wiser  
 than my | enemies,\*

for it is ever | with me.

<sup>99</sup> I have more understanding  
 than all my | teachers,\*

for your testimonies are  
 my medi- | tation.

<sup>100</sup> I understand more than the | agèd,\*  
 for I keep your | precepts.

<sup>101</sup> I hold back my feet from every | evil way,\*  
 in order to | keep your word.

<sup>102</sup> I do not turn aside from your | just  
 decrees,\*  
 for you have | taught me.

<sup>103</sup> How sweet are your words | to my taste,\*  
 sweeter than honey | to my mouth!

<sup>104</sup> Through your precepts I get  
 under- | standing,\*  
 therefore I hate every | false way.

—Psalm 119:97–104

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 122*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Numbers 13:1–3, 17–33**

Spies Sent into Canaan

<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

<sup>2</sup>“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan,  
 which I am giving to the people of Israel.  
 From each tribe of their fathers you shall  
 send a man, every one a chief among them.”

<sup>3</sup>So Moses sent them from the wilderness  
 of Paran, according to the command of the  
 LORD, all of them men who were heads of the  
 people of Israel. . . .

<sup>17</sup>Moses sent them to spy out the land  
 of Canaan and said to them, “Go up into  
 the Negeb and go up into the hill country,  
<sup>18</sup>and see what the land is, and whether the  
 people who dwell in it are strong or weak,  
 whether they are few or many, <sup>19</sup>and whether  
 the land that they dwell in is good or bad,  
 and whether the cities that they dwell in are  
 camps or strongholds, <sup>20</sup>and whether the land  
 is rich or poor, and whether there are trees in  
 it or not. Be of good courage and bring some  
 of the fruit of the land.” Now the time was  
 the season of the first ripe grapes.

<sup>21</sup>So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, near Lebo-hamath. <sup>22</sup>They went up into the Negeb and came to Hebron. Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) <sup>23</sup>And they came to the Valley of Eshcol and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they also brought some pomegranates and figs. <sup>24</sup>That place was called the Valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster that the people of Israel cut down from there.

#### Report of the Spies

<sup>25</sup>At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. <sup>26</sup>And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh. They brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. <sup>27</sup>And they told him, “We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. <sup>28</sup>However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. <sup>29</sup>The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.”

<sup>30</sup>But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.” <sup>31</sup>Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.” <sup>32</sup>So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out,

saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. <sup>33</sup>And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

#### New Testament Reading: Luke 18:1–17

##### The Parable of the Persistent Widow

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

##### The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

<sup>9</sup>He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: <sup>10</sup>“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a

week; I give tithes of all that I get.’<sup>13</sup> But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’

<sup>14</sup>I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Let the Children Come to Me

<sup>15</sup>Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

<sup>16</sup>But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. <sup>17</sup>Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

## Writing

St. Paul writes to the Church in Corinth: “The Jews seek signs, and the Greeks ask for wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Gentiles foolishness; but to them that are saved, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” . . . (Paul) thought it not enough to speak of Christ as God without adding that He was crucified. He spoke this way for the sake of the open and solid teaching of the faith that the Christ, whom he called “the crucified,” is the wisdom of God. . . . Nor did he blush at the mention of the cross of Christ when he preached the Gospel of the Lord. And though it was a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles to hear of God as born, God in bodily form, God suffering, God crucified, yet he did not weaken the force of his pious utterance because of the wickedness of the

offense of the Jews. Nor did he lessen the vigor of his faith because of the unbelief and foolishness of others. Rather, he openly, persistently, and boldly proclaimed that He—whom a mother had borne, whom men had slain, the spear had pierced, the cross had stretched—was “the power and wisdom of God,” “to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness.” But still that which was to some a stumbling-block and foolishness, was to others the power and wisdom of God.

—John Cassian

## Hymnody

O Jesus, let Thy precious blood  
Be to my soul a cleansing flood.  
Turn not, O Lord, Thy guest away,  
But grant that justified I may  
Go to my house at peace with Thee:  
O God, be merciful to me!

—To Thee, Omniscient Lord of All  
(*LSB* 613:3)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, almighty and everlasting God, You have commanded us to pray and have promised to hear us. Mercifully grant that Your Holy Spirit may direct and govern our hearts in all things that we may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C82)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
XI 1–7

**SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**Psalmody**

<sup>10</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of | Egypt.\*

Open your mouth wide, and I will | fill it.

<sup>11</sup>“But my people did not listen | to my voice;\*

Israel would not sub- | mit to me.

<sup>12</sup>So I gave them over to their | stubborn hearts,\*

to follow their own | counsels.

<sup>13</sup>Oh, that my people would lis- | ten to me,\* that Israel would walk | in my ways!

<sup>14</sup>I would soon subdue their | enemies\* and turn my hand a- | gainst their foes.

<sup>15</sup>Those who hate the LORD would | cringe toward him,\*

and their fate would last for- | ever.

<sup>16</sup>But he would feed you with the finest | of the wheat,\*

and with honey from the rock

I would sat- | isfy you.”

—Psalm 81:10–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 9*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Numbers 14:1–25**

The People Rebel

<sup>1</sup>Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. <sup>2</sup>And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! <sup>3</sup>Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?”

<sup>4</sup>And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

<sup>5</sup>Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. <sup>6</sup>And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes <sup>7</sup>and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, “The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. <sup>8</sup>If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. <sup>9</sup>Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.” <sup>10</sup>Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel.

<sup>11</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? <sup>12</sup>I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.”

Moses Intercedes for the People

<sup>13</sup>But Moses said to the LORD, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, <sup>14</sup>and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people. For you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. <sup>15</sup>Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard

your fame will say, <sup>16</sup>“It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.” <sup>17</sup>And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, <sup>18</sup>“The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.” <sup>19</sup>Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.”

#### God Promises Judgment

<sup>20</sup>Then the LORD said, “I have pardoned, according to your word. <sup>21</sup>But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD, <sup>22</sup>none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, <sup>23</sup>shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it. <sup>24</sup>But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it. <sup>25</sup>Now, since the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valleys, turn tomorrow and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.”

#### New Testament Reading: Luke 18:18–34

##### The Rich Ruler

<sup>18</sup>And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>19</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. <sup>20</sup>You

know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’” <sup>21</sup>And he said, “All these I have kept from my youth.” <sup>22</sup>When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” <sup>23</sup>But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. <sup>24</sup>Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, “How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup>For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” <sup>26</sup>Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” <sup>27</sup>But he said, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.” <sup>28</sup>And Peter said, “See, we have left our homes and followed you.” <sup>29</sup>And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, <sup>30</sup>who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

##### Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time

<sup>31</sup>And taking the twelve, he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. <sup>32</sup>For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. <sup>33</sup>And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.” <sup>34</sup>But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

## Writing

Philologos: The disciples of Christ saw Christ when He still had to suffer and die, and was on earth with and among them visibly. But now He has ascended with His body, as a man, out of this visible world into heaven. How, then, can He be present in the Supper with His body?

Timotheos: This objection prevents nothing at all, but rather confirms the unchangeable truth of the Words of Christ. For if the Lord Christ, still in the state of His visible humiliation was present with His disciples and they became communicants of His body and blood, how much more will He be present with His Christian congregation and make them communicants of His body and blood, now that He is exalted with His body out of all hindrance and humiliation and out of this perishable, temporal world, and is seated in the heavenly, invisible (to us), eternal, and divine glory, honor, and majesty, ascended into heaven—indeed, above all the heavens!—and rules over all creatures at the right hand of God the Father Almighty? And for this reason He also wants the Holy Supper to be held and observed—one time just as the other time—until the Last Day, and He wants us to be certain of His true presence, as true as He is truthful and powerful, having all power in heaven and on earth. Therefore just as the Words of Institution are always of the same kind, as often as we hold the Supper, and these words are not changed, so also the presence of Him who spoke these words, and still speaks them at the Supper, are of the same kind. For whoever speaks, speaks with His mouth and is present. For this reason, the Words of Institution, as often as they are spoken by the

servant of the Word, are always the words of the present Lord Christ. But if He is not present, then they are not the words of the Lord Christ—which is horrible, abominable, and blasphemous to hear.

—Nicolaus Selnecker

## Hymnody

No work is left undone  
Of all the Father willed;  
His toil, His sorrows, one by one,  
The Scriptures have fulfilled.

—O Perfect Life of Love (*LSB* 452:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L48)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 8–13

## MONDAY—EASTER 7

## Psalmody

<sup>5</sup>Blessèd is he whose help is the God  
of | Jacob,\*

whose hope is in the | LORD his God,

<sup>6</sup>who made heaven and earth, the sea,  
and all that is | in them,\*

who keeps faith for- | ever;

<sup>7</sup>who executes justice for | the oppressed,\*  
who gives food to the | hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free; <sup>8</sup>the LORD  
opens the eyes | of the blind.\*

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed  
down; the LORD loves the | righteous.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD watches over the sojourners;  
he upholds the widow and the | fatherless,\*  
but the way of the wicked  
he brings to | ruin.

—Psalm 146:5–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 142*

### Old Testament Reading: Numbers 14:26–45

[God Promises Judgment]

<sup>26</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses and  
to Aaron, saying, <sup>27</sup>“How long shall this  
wicked congregation grumble against me?  
I have heard the grumblings of the people  
of Israel, which they grumble against me.

<sup>28</sup>Say to them, ‘As I live, declares the LORD,  
what you have said in my hearing I will do  
to you: <sup>29</sup>your dead bodies shall fall in this  
wilderness, and of all your number, listed  
in the census from twenty years old and  
upward, who have grumbled against me, <sup>30</sup>not  
one shall come into the land where I swore  
that I would make you dwell, except Caleb  
the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son  
of Nun. <sup>31</sup>But your little ones, who you said

would become a prey, I will bring in, and they  
shall know the land that you have rejected.

<sup>32</sup>But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall  
in this wilderness. <sup>33</sup>And your children  
shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty  
years and shall suffer for your faithlessness,  
until the last of your dead bodies lies in the  
wilderness. <sup>34</sup>According to the number of  
the days in which you spied out the land,  
forty days, a year for each day, you shall  
bear your iniquity forty years, and you shall  
know my displeasure.’ <sup>35</sup>I, the LORD, have  
spoken. Surely this will I do to all this wicked  
congregation who are gathered together  
against me: in this wilderness they shall come  
to a full end, and there they shall die.”

<sup>36</sup>And the men whom Moses sent to spy  
out the land, who returned and made all  
the congregation grumble against him by  
bringing up a bad report about the land—  
<sup>37</sup>the men who brought up a bad report of the  
land—died by plague before the LORD. <sup>38</sup>Of  
those men who went to spy out the land, only  
Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of  
Jephunneh remained alive.

Israel Defeated in Battle

<sup>39</sup>When Moses told these words to all the  
people of Israel, the people mourned greatly.  
<sup>40</sup>And they rose early in the morning and  
went up to the heights of the hill country,  
saying, “Here we are. We will go up to the  
place that the LORD has promised, for we  
have sinned.” <sup>41</sup>But Moses said, “Why now  
are you transgressing the command of the  
LORD, when that will not succeed? <sup>42</sup>Do not  
go up, for the Lord is not among you, lest you  
be struck down before your enemies. <sup>43</sup>For  
there the Amalekites and the Canaanites  
are facing you, and you shall fall by the  
sword. Because you have turned back from  
following the LORD, the LORD will not be

with you.”<sup>44</sup>But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed out of the camp.<sup>45</sup>Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah.

*Additional Reading: Numbers 15:1–41*

### New Testament Reading:

#### Luke 18:35–19:10

Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar

<sup>35</sup>As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.<sup>36</sup>And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant.<sup>37</sup>They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”<sup>38</sup>And he cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”<sup>39</sup>And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”<sup>40</sup>And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him,<sup>41</sup>“What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let me recover my sight.”<sup>42</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.”<sup>43</sup>And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Jesus and Zacchaeus

<sup>19:1</sup>He entered Jericho and was passing through.<sup>2</sup>And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich.<sup>3</sup>And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature.<sup>4</sup>So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about

to pass that way.<sup>5</sup>And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.”<sup>6</sup>So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.<sup>7</sup>And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.”<sup>8</sup>And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.”<sup>9</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.<sup>10</sup>For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

### Writing

Augustine says:

True satisfaction is to cut off the causes of sin, that is, to put the flesh to death, likewise to hold the flesh in check, not in order that eternal punishments may be paid for, but so that the flesh may not be drawn to sin.

About repayment, Gregory says that repentance is false “if it does not satisfy those whose property we have taken.” For the person who still steals does not truly grieve that he has stolen or robbed. He is a thief or robber as long as he is the unjust possessor of the property of another. This civil satisfaction is necessary, because it is written, “Let the thief no longer steal” (Ephesians 4:28). Likewise, Chrysostom says, “In the heart, contrition; in the mouth, confession; in the work, entire humility.” This amounts to nothing against us. Good works should follow repentance. It should be repentance

(not a show), a change of the entire life for the better.

... We have already frequently testified that repentance should produce good fruit. These good fruit are what the commandments teach: prayer, thanksgiving, the confession of the Gospel, teaching the Gospel, obeying parents and rulers, and being faithful to one's calling. We should not kill, not hold on to hatred, but we should be forgiving and give to the needy, so far as we can according to our means. We should not commit sexual sins or adultery, but should hold in check, bridle, and chastise the flesh, not for a repayment of eternal punishment, but so as not to obey the devil or offend the Holy Spirit. Likewise, we should speak the truth. These fruit have God's command and should be produced for the sake of God's glory and command. They have their rewards also.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIB (VI) 71[168]–73[170], 77[174]

### Hymnody

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

—Just as I Am, Without One Plea  
(LSB 570:4)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, stir up the hearts of Your faithful people to welcome and joyfully receive Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, that He may find in us a fit dwelling place; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C84)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
XI 14–26

## TUESDAY—EASTER 7

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! I will give thanks  
to the LORD with my | whole heart,\*  
in the company of the upright,  
in the congre- | gation.
- <sup>2</sup> Great are the works | of the LORD,\*  
studied by all who de- | light in them.
- <sup>3</sup> Full of splendor and majesty | is his work,\*  
and his righteousness endures for- | ever.
- <sup>4</sup> He has caused his wondrous works  
to be re- | membered;\*  
the LORD is gracious and | merciful.
- <sup>5</sup> He provides food for those who | fear him;\*  
he remembers his covenant for- | ever.
- <sup>6</sup> He has shown his people the  
power | of his works,\*  
in giving them the inheritance  
of the | nations.
- <sup>7</sup> The works of his hands  
are faith- | ful and just;\*  
all his precepts are | trustworthy;
- <sup>8</sup> they are established forever and | ever,\*  
to be performed with faithfulness  
and up- | rightness.
- <sup>9</sup> He sent redemption to his people; he has  
commanded his covenant for- | ever.\*  
Holy and awesome | is his name!
- <sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning  
of wisdom; all those who practice  
it have a good under- | standing.\*  
His praise endures for- | ever!  
—Psalm 111

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 45*

## Old Testament Reading: Numbers 16:1–22

### Korah's Rebellion

<sup>1</sup>Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. <sup>2</sup>And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. <sup>3</sup>They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" <sup>4</sup>When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, <sup>5</sup>and he said to Korah and all his company, "In the morning the LORD will show who is his, and who is holy, and will bring him near to him. The one whom he chooses he will bring near to him. <sup>6</sup>Do this: take censers, Korah and all his company; <sup>7</sup>put fire in them and put incense on them before the LORD tomorrow, and the man whom the LORD chooses shall be the holy one. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!" <sup>8</sup>And Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: <sup>9</sup>is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do service in the tabernacle of the LORD and to stand before the congregation to minister to them, <sup>10</sup>and that he has brought you near him, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And would you seek the priesthood also? <sup>11</sup>Therefore it is against the LORD that you and all your company have gathered together. What is Aaron that you grumble against him?"

<sup>12</sup>And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and they said, "We will not come up. <sup>13</sup>Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you must also make yourself a prince over us? <sup>14</sup>Moreover, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up." <sup>15</sup>And Moses was very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, and I have not harmed one of them."

<sup>16</sup>And Moses said to Korah, "Be present, you and all your company, before the LORD, you and they, and Aaron, tomorrow. <sup>17</sup>And let every one of you take his censer and put incense on it, and every one of you bring before the LORD his censer, 250 censers; you also, and Aaron, each his censer." <sup>18</sup>So every man took his censer and put fire in them and laid incense on them and stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron. <sup>19</sup>Then Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

<sup>20</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, <sup>21</sup>"Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." <sup>22</sup>And they fell on their faces and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will you be angry with all the congregation?"

**New Testament Reading: Luke 19:11–28**

## The Parable of the Ten Minas

<sup>11</sup>As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. <sup>12</sup>He said therefore, “A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. <sup>13</sup>Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come.’ <sup>14</sup>But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’ <sup>15</sup>When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. <sup>16</sup>The first came before him, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.’ <sup>17</sup>And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’ <sup>18</sup>And the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made five minas.’ <sup>19</sup>And he said to him, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’ <sup>20</sup>Then another came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; <sup>21</sup>for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’ <sup>22</sup>He said to him, ‘I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? <sup>23</sup>Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’ <sup>24</sup>And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’ <sup>25</sup>And they said to him,

‘Lord, he has ten minas!’ <sup>26</sup>‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>27</sup>But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.’ ”

<sup>28</sup>And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

**Writing**

What the Gospels say is to be regarded in the light of promises of good things. And we must say that the good things the apostles announce in this Gospel are simply Jesus. One good thing they announce is the resurrection. But the resurrection is in a manner Jesus, for Jesus says: “I am the resurrection.” Jesus preaches to the poor those things which are laid up for the saints, calling them to the divine promises. And the Holy Scriptures bear witness to the Gospel announcements made by the apostles and to that made by our Savior. David says of the apostles: “The Lord shall give the word to those who preach with great power; the King of the powers of the beloved.” Thus David teaches that it is divine power and not skillfully composed discourse, mode of delivery, or well-practiced eloquence that produces conviction. Hence also Paul says: “I will know not the word that is puffed up, but the power; for the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” And in another passage: “And my word and my preaching were not persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power.” To this power Simon and Cleopas bear witness when they say: “Was not our heart burning within us by the way, as He opened to us the Scriptures?” And the apostles, according to the measure God gave, had great power,

according to the word of David: “The Lord will give the word to the preachers with great power.” Isaiah, too, says: “How beautiful are the feet of them that proclaim good tidings.” Isaiah sees how beautiful and how opportune was the announcement of the apostles who walked in Him who said, “I am the way.” And Isaiah praises the feet of those who walk in the intellectual way of Christ Jesus, and through that door go in to God. Those whose feet are beautiful announce good tidings, namely, they announce Jesus.

—Origen

### Hymnody

The world seeks after wealth  
 And all that mammon offers  
 Yet never is content  
 Though gold should fill its coffers.  
 I have a higher good,  
 Content with it I'll be:  
 My Jesus is my wealth.  
 What is the world to me!

—What Is the World to Me  
 (LSB 730:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God heavenly Father, as we struggle here below with divisions among us, searching for peace among men, remind us daily of the peace of heaven purchased through the bloody death and triumphant resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit are one God, now and forever. (1023)

### Suggested Reading from theBook of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
 XI 27–32

## WEDNESDAY—EASTER 7

### Psalmody

- <sup>19</sup> Open to me the gates of | righteousness,\*  
 that I may enter through them  
 and give thanks | to the LORD.
- <sup>20</sup> This is the gate | of the LORD;\*  
 the righteous shall enter | through it.
- <sup>21</sup> I thank you that you have | answered me\*  
 and have become my sal- | vation.
- <sup>22</sup> The stone that the builders re- | jected\*  
 has become the | cornerstone.
- <sup>23</sup> This is the LORD's | doing;\*  
 it is marvelous | in our eyes.
- <sup>24</sup> This is the day that the | LORD has made;\*  
 let us rejoice and be | glad in it.
- <sup>25</sup> Save us, we pray, | O LORD!\*  
 O LORD, we pray, give | us success!  
 —Psalm 118:19–25

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 9*

### Old Testament Reading: Numbers 16:23–40

[Korah's Rebellion]

- <sup>23</sup> And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
<sup>24</sup> “Say to the congregation, Get away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.”
- <sup>25</sup> Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. <sup>26</sup> And he spoke to the congregation, saying, “Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins.” <sup>27</sup> So they got away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, together with their wives, their sons, and their little ones. <sup>28</sup> And Moses said, “Hereby you shall know that the LORD has

sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord. <sup>29</sup>If these men die as all men die, or if they are visited by the fate of all mankind, then the LORD has not sent me. <sup>30</sup>But if the LORD creates something new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the LORD.”

<sup>31</sup>And as soon as he had finished speaking all these words, the ground under them split apart. <sup>32</sup>And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods. <sup>33</sup>So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. <sup>34</sup>And all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, “Lest the earth swallow us up!” <sup>35</sup>And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men offering the incense.

<sup>36</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>37</sup>“Tell Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest to take up the censers out of the blaze. Then scatter the fire far and wide, for they have become holy. <sup>38</sup>As for the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar, for they offered them before the LORD, and they became holy. Thus they shall be a sign to the people of Israel.” <sup>39</sup>So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned had offered, and they were hammered out as a covering for the altar, <sup>40</sup>to be a reminder to the people of Israel, so that no outsider, who is not of the descendants of Aaron, should draw near to burn incense before the LORD,

lest he become like Korah and his company—as the LORD said to him through Moses.

## New Testament Reading: Luke 19:29–48

### The Triumphal Entry

<sup>29</sup>When [Jesus] drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup>saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup>If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” <sup>32</sup>So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. <sup>33</sup>And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” <sup>34</sup>And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” <sup>35</sup>And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup>And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup>As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, <sup>38</sup>saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” <sup>39</sup>And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” <sup>40</sup>He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

### Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem

<sup>41</sup>And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, <sup>42</sup>saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup>For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set

up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side <sup>44</sup>and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

<sup>45</sup>And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, <sup>46</sup>saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.”

<sup>47</sup>And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, <sup>48</sup>but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

## Writing

According to its substance . . . the mass is nothing but the aforesaid words of Christ: “Take and eat, etc.” [Matt. 26:26], as if he were saying: “Behold, O sinful and condemned man, out of the pure and unmerited love with which I love you, and by the will of the Father of mercies [II Cor. 1:3], apart from any merit or desire of yours, I promise you in these words the forgiveness of all your sins and life everlasting. And that you may be absolutely certain of this irrevocable promise of mine, I shall give my body and pour out my blood, confirming this promise by my very death, and leaving you my body and blood as a sign and memorial of this same promise. As often as you partake of them, remember me, proclaim and praise my love and bounty toward you, and give thanks.” From this . . . nothing else is needed for a worthy holding of mass than a faith that

relies confidently on this promise, believes Christ to be true in these words of his, and does not doubt that these infinite blessings have been bestowed upon it. . . . Who would not shed tears of gladness, indeed, almost faint for joy in Christ, if he believed with unshaken faith that this inestimable promise of Christ belonged to him? How could he help loving so great a benefactor, who of his own accord offers, promises, and grants such great riches and this eternal inheritance to one who is unworthy and deserving of something far different?

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die.  
Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain,  
Then take, O God, Thy pow’r and reign.

—Ride On, Ride On in Majesty  
(LSB 441:5)

## Prayer of the Day

O King who comes in the name of the Lord, through Your birth and death, earth and heaven were joined together in peace. May Your coming as King into Jerusalem in humility on the donkey help us to see that You continue to come to us as our King hidden in humble water, humble words, humble food; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1025)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 33–37

## THURSDAY—EASTER 7

**Psalmody**

- <sup>14</sup> Turn again, O | God of hosts!\*
- Look down from | heaven, and see;  
have regard for this vine, <sup>15</sup> the stock that  
your right hand | planted,\*  
and for the son whom you made  
strong | for yourself.
- <sup>16</sup> They have burned it with fire;  
they have | cut it down;\*  
may they perish at the rebuke | of  
your face!
- <sup>17</sup> But let your hand be on the man  
of your | right hand,\*  
the son of man whom you have  
made strong | for yourself!
- <sup>18</sup> Then we shall not turn | back from you;\*  
give us life, and we will call  
up- | on your name!
- <sup>19</sup> Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts!\*
- Let your face shine,  
that we | may be saved!  
—Psalm 80:14–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 91*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Numbers 16:41–17:13**

[Korah's Rebellion]

<sup>41</sup> But on the next day all the congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD." <sup>42</sup> And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting. And behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. <sup>43</sup> And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, <sup>44</sup> and the

LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>45</sup> "Get away from the midst of this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell on their faces. <sup>46</sup> And Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer, and put fire on it from off the altar and lay incense on it and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone out from the LORD; the plague has begun." <sup>47</sup> So Aaron took it as Moses said and ran into the midst of the assembly. And behold, the plague had already begun among the people. And he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. <sup>48</sup> And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped. <sup>49</sup> Now those who died in the plague were 14,700, besides those who died in the affair of Korah. <sup>50</sup> And Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting, when the plague was stopped.

Aaron's Staff Buds

<sup>17:1</sup> The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
<sup>2</sup> "Speak to the people of Israel, and get from them staffs, one for each fathers' house, from all their chiefs according to their fathers' houses, twelve staffs. Write each man's name on his staff, <sup>3</sup> and write Aaron's name on the staff of Levi. For there shall be one staff for the head of each fathers' house. <sup>4</sup> Then you shall deposit them in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you. <sup>5</sup> And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout. Thus I will make to cease from me the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against you." <sup>6</sup> Moses spoke to the people of Israel. And all their chiefs gave him staffs, one for each chief, according to their fathers' houses, twelve staffs. And the staff of Aaron was among

their staffs. <sup>7</sup>And Moses deposited the staffs before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

<sup>8</sup>On the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony, and behold, the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds. <sup>9</sup>Then Moses brought out all the staffs from before the LORD to all the people of Israel. And they looked, and each man took his staff. <sup>10</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Put back the staff of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept as a sign for the rebels, that you may make an end of their grumblings against me, lest they die.” <sup>11</sup>Thus did Moses; as the LORD commanded him, so he did.

<sup>12</sup>And the people of Israel said to Moses, “Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone. <sup>13</sup>Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, shall die. Are we all to perish?”

*Additional Reading: Numbers 18:1–19:22*

### New Testament Reading: Luke 20:1–18

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

<sup>1</sup>One day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up <sup>2</sup>and said to him, “Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority.” <sup>3</sup>He answered them, “I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, <sup>4</sup>was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?” <sup>5</sup>And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ <sup>6</sup>But if we say, ‘From man,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” <sup>7</sup>So they answered that they did not know where it came from. <sup>8</sup>And Jesus

said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

<sup>9</sup>And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. <sup>10</sup>When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>11</sup>And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>12</sup>And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. <sup>13</sup>Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ <sup>14</sup>But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ <sup>15</sup>And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? <sup>16</sup>He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!” <sup>17</sup>But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written:

“ ‘The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone’?”

<sup>18</sup>Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

### Writing

This ministry will endure and is not to be replaced by any other. But the incumbents of this ministry do not remain; they die. This necessitates an ever-new supply of preachers,

which calls for the employment of certain means. The ministry, that is, the Word of God, Baptism, and Holy Communion, came directly from Christ; but later Christ departed from this earth. Now a new way of sending was instituted, which works through man but is not of man. We were sent according to this method; according to it, we elect and send others, and we install them in their ministry to preach and to administer the sacraments. This type of sending is also of God and commanded by God. Even though God resorts to our aid and to human agency, it is He Himself who sends laborers into His vineyard.

Therefore everyone [who preaches] must realize that he has been sent. That is, he must know that he has been called; he dare not venture to sneak into the office furtively and without authorization. It must be done in the open. The sending is done through man, for example, when a city, a prince, or a congregation calls someone into office. But at the same time this person is sent by God.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Christ is made the sure foundation,  
Christ, our head and cornerstone,  
Chosen of the Lord and precious,  
Binding all the Church in one;  
Holy Zion's help forever  
And our confidence alone.

—Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation  
(LSB 909:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, You are the stone that the builders rejected. But on the third day, You became the cornerstone. By Your Word and

Spirit, open our hearts to receive You as the beloved Son sent from the Father so that we might always embrace suffering as the means by which we enter into Your glory; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1025)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 38–44

## FRIDAY—EASTER 7

### Psalmody

- <sup>9</sup>The Ephraimites, armed | with the bow,\*  
turned back on the day of | battle.
- <sup>10</sup>They did not keep God's | covenant,\*  
but refused to walk according | to his law.
- <sup>11</sup>They for- | got his works\*  
and the wonders that he had | shown  
them.
- <sup>12</sup>In the sight of their fathers he  
performed | wonders\*  
in the land of Egypt,  
in the | fields of Zoan.
- <sup>13</sup>He divided the sea and let them | pass  
through it,\*  
and made the waters stand | like a heap.
- <sup>14</sup>In the daytime he led them | with a cloud,\*  
and all the night with a | fiery light.
- <sup>15</sup>He split rocks in the | wilderness\*  
and gave them drink abundantly  
as | from the deep.
- <sup>16</sup>He made streams come out | of the rock\*  
and caused waters to flow  
down like | rivers.
- Psalm 78:9–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 110*

## Old Testament Reading: Numbers 20:1–21

### The Death of Miriam

<sup>1</sup>And the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh. And Miriam died there and was buried there.

### The Waters of Meribah

<sup>2</sup>Now there was no water for the congregation. And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. <sup>3</sup>And the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD! <sup>4</sup>Why have you brought the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? <sup>5</sup>And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink.” <sup>6</sup>Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them, <sup>7</sup>and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>8</sup>“Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle.” <sup>9</sup>And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

### Moses Strikes the Rock

<sup>10</sup>Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?” <sup>11</sup>And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock

with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. <sup>12</sup>And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.” <sup>13</sup>These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the LORD, and through them he showed himself holy.

### Edom Refuses Passage

<sup>14</sup>Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom: “Thus says your brother Israel: You know all the hardship that we have met: <sup>15</sup>how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we lived in Egypt a long time. And the Egyptians dealt harshly with us and our fathers. <sup>16</sup>And when we cried to the LORD, he heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt. And here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory. <sup>17</sup>Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard, or drink water from a well. We will go along the King’s Highway. We will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.” <sup>18</sup>But Edom said to him, “You shall not pass through, lest I come out with the sword against you.” <sup>19</sup>And the people of Israel said to him, “We will go up by the highway, and if we drink of your water, I and my livestock, then I will pay for it. Let me only pass through on foot, nothing more.” <sup>20</sup>But he said, “You shall not pass through.” And Edom came out against them with a large army and with a strong force. <sup>21</sup>Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory, so Israel turned away from him.

**New Testament Reading: Luke 20:19–44****Paying Taxes to Caesar**

<sup>19</sup>The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people. <sup>20</sup>So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. <sup>21</sup>So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. <sup>22</sup>Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?” <sup>23</sup>But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, <sup>24</sup>“Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” They said, “Caesar’s.” <sup>25</sup>He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” <sup>26</sup>And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answer they became silent.

**Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection**

<sup>27</sup>There came to him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, <sup>28</sup>and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>29</sup>Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died without children. <sup>30</sup>And the second <sup>31</sup>and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died. <sup>32</sup>Afterward the woman also died. <sup>33</sup>In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife.”

<sup>34</sup>And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, <sup>35</sup>but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, <sup>36</sup>for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup>But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. <sup>38</sup>Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.” <sup>39</sup>Then some of the scribes answered, “Teacher, you have spoken well.” <sup>40</sup>For they no longer dared to ask him any question.

**Whose Son Is the Christ?**

<sup>41</sup>But he said to them, “How can they say that the Christ is David’s son? <sup>42</sup>For David himself says in the Book of Psalms,

“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,  
Sit at my right hand,  
<sup>43</sup>until I make your enemies  
your footstool.’

<sup>44</sup>David thus calls him Lord, so how is he his son?”

**Writing**

There are some who have no hope that the resurrection can take place. They look upon dry bones and distrust that these bones can be clothed with flesh and grow again into life. Those who do not have faith in the resurrection from obedience should certainly have it from reason. For what does nature imitate daily if not our own resurrection? For through daily revolutions the temporal light itself seems to die, when the shades of night come upon it and that which was seen

is drawn away, and daily it seems to rise again when the light that was taken away from the eyes with the repression of the night is restored. For through the cycles of the seasons we perceive that the trees lose the greenness of their leaves and cease from the production of fruits. And behold, suddenly, from a drying log, as it were, a kind of resurrection happens for we see leaves break forth, fruit grow large, and the whole tree become clothed with quickened beauty. But behold, I grant the resurrection, yet I seek the effect of the resurrection. For I believe that I shall rise again but I wish to hear of what nature I shall be. For I must know whether perhaps I shall rise in something else, subtle or ephemeral, or in the body in which I remain. But if I shall rise in an ephemeral body, then I shall not be the one who rises. For how is it true resurrection if the flesh cannot be true? Therefore, clear reasoning suggests that, if the flesh will not be true, without doubt the resurrection will not be true. So also, our Redeemer showed His hands and side to the disciples who doubted His resurrection He offered them His bones and flesh to handle, saying: "Handle and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have."

—Hugh of Saint Victor

### Hymnody

Christ sits at God's right hand,  
His saving work complete,  
To reign till ev'ry foe will lie  
Beneath His feet—  
All that the Father planned,  
The Son sought to fulfill,  
When first He said, "Lord, here am I  
To do Your will."

—Christ Sits at God's Right Hand  
(LSB 564:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Living God, Your almighty power is made known chiefly in showing mercy and pity. Grant us the fullness of Your grace to lay hold of Your promises and live forever in Your presence; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C85)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 45–52

## SATURDAY—EASTER 7

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> I love the LORD, because | he has heard\*  
my voice and my pleas for | mercy.
- <sup>2</sup> Because he inclined his | ear to me,\*  
therefore I will call on him  
as long | as I live.
- <sup>3</sup> The snares of death encompassed me; the  
pangs of Sheol laid | hold on me;\*  
I suffered distress and | anguish.
- <sup>4</sup> Then I called on the name | of the LORD:\*  
"O LORD, I pray, deliv- | er my soul!"
- <sup>16</sup> O LORD, I am your | servant;\*  
I am your servant, the son  
of your maidservant.  
You have | loosed my bonds.
- <sup>17</sup> I will offer to you the sacrifice  
of thanks- | giving\*  
and call on the name | of the LORD.
- <sup>18</sup> I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
in the presence of all his | people,

<sup>19</sup>in the courts of the house | of the LORD,\*  
in your midst, O Jerusalem. | Praise the  
LORD!

—Psalm 116:1–4, 16–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 109*

### **Old Testament Reading: Numbers 20:22–21:9**

The Death of Aaron

<sup>22</sup>And they journeyed from Kadesh, and the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came to Mount Hor. <sup>23</sup>And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor, on the border of the land of Edom, <sup>24</sup>“Let Aaron be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land that I have given to the people of Israel, because you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah. <sup>25</sup>Take Aaron and Eleazar his son and bring them up to Mount Hor. <sup>26</sup>And strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron shall be gathered to his people and shall die there.” <sup>27</sup>Moses did as the LORD commanded. And they went up Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. <sup>28</sup>And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. <sup>29</sup>And when all the congregation saw that Aaron had perished, all the house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days.

Arad Destroyed

<sup>21:1</sup>When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive. <sup>2</sup>And Israel vowed a vow to the LORD and said, “If you will indeed give this people

into my hand, then I will devote their cities to destruction.” <sup>3</sup>And the LORD heeded the voice of Israel and gave over the Canaanites, and they devoted them and their cities to destruction. So the name of the place was called Hormah.

The Bronze Serpent

<sup>4</sup>From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup>And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.” <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. <sup>7</sup>And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” <sup>9</sup>So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

### **New Testament Reading: Luke 20:45–21:19**

Beware of the Scribes

<sup>45</sup>And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples, <sup>46</sup>“Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, <sup>47</sup>who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

The Widow's Offering

<sup>21:1</sup>Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, <sup>2</sup>and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. <sup>3</sup>And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. <sup>4</sup>For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Jesus Foretells Destruction of the Temple

<sup>5</sup>And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, <sup>6</sup>"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." <sup>7</sup>And they asked him, "Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" <sup>8</sup>And 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. <sup>9</sup>And 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."

Jesus Foretells Wars and Persecution

<sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup>There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. <sup>12</sup>But 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. <sup>13</sup>This will be your opportunity to bear witness. <sup>14</sup>Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, <sup>15</sup>for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will

be able to withstand or contradict. <sup>16</sup>You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. <sup>17</sup>You will be hated by all for my name's sake. <sup>18</sup>But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup>By your endurance you will gain your lives."

Writing

Although there is certainly this distinction (as Luther explains) between Christ sitting above in heaven and being in the Sacrament and being in the hearts of believers—for He ascended into heaven in order to be worshiped and confessed there, that He is the Lord, mighty over all things (Philippians 2), but in the Sacrament and in the hearts of believers He is not present for the particular purpose of being worshiped but in order to deal with us there and help us—nevertheless from this it does not follow that He should not be worshiped in the Sacrament as well. For just as our dear Lord Christ was born in the flesh in this world not in order to be served but in order to serve us and give His life as the redemption of many (Matthew 21), and He did not appear in the world in the poor form of a servant principally to be worshiped, still He graciously accepted the external honor shown to Him by believers. And He was worshiped by the people when they saw nothing before their eyes but a poor, miserable man: the Wise Men from the east worshiped Him in the form of a little child; the holy angels served Him—they worshiped the Son of Man—who, as John 3 says, stands at the same time before Nicodemus on earth and is in heaven. Therefore also in the same way, though our dear Lord Christ did not institute His Holy Supper for the sake of

seeing and worshiping, nevertheless it is not to be forbidden nor, in addition, to be considered idolatry, but much rather it is to be considered proper and correct when this Holy Supper is held according to the institution of our dear Lord Jesus Christ and when people are present there with all devotion and reverence, and worship there our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, who is present in this venerable Sacrament not only according to His divine omnipotence, spiritually, but also bodily, truly, and essentially, yet invisibly, as the one who sits at the right hand of the divine Majesty and is exalted by God and has received a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus Christ, every knee in heaven and on earth shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father [Phil. 2:10–11].

—Georg von Anhalt

### Hymnody

Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's head,  
You are her one foundation;  
In You she trusts, before You bows,  
And waits for Your salvation.  
Built on this rock secure,  
Your Church shall endure  
Though all the world decay  
And all things pass away.  
O hear, O hear us, Jesus!

—Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's  
Head (*LSB* 647:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, You fulfilled Your promise by sending the gift of the Holy Spirit to unite disciples of all nations in the cross and resurrection of Your

Son, Jesus Christ. By the preaching of the Gospel spread this gift to the ends of the earth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L49)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
XI 53–64

## THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Propers for the Day of Pentecost and its octave for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.

### Psalmody

- <sup>8</sup> He it was who struck down the firstborn  
of | Egypt,\*  
both of man | and of beast;
- <sup>9</sup> who in your midst, O | Egypt,\*  
sent signs and wonders against Pharaoh  
and all his | servants;
- <sup>10</sup> who struck down many | nations\*  
and killed | mighty kings,
- <sup>11</sup> Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og,  
king of | Bashan,\*  
and all the kingdoms of | Canaan,
- <sup>12</sup> and gave their land as a | heritage,\*  
a heritage to his people | Israel.
- <sup>13</sup> Your name, O LORD, endures for- | ever,\*  
your renown, O LORD,  
throughout all | ages.
- <sup>14</sup> For the LORD will vindicate his | people\*  
and have compassion on his | servants.  
—Psalm 135:8–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 58*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Numbers 21:10–35**

The Song of the Well

<sup>10</sup>And the people of Israel set out and camped in Oboth. <sup>11</sup>And they set out from Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness that is opposite Moab, toward the sunrise. <sup>12</sup>From there they set out and camped in the Valley of Zered. <sup>13</sup>From there they set out and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness that extends from the border of the Amorites, for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. <sup>14</sup>Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD,

“Waheb in Suphah, and the valleys of the Arnon,

<sup>15</sup>and the slope of the valleys that extends to the seat of Ar, and leans to the border of Moab.”

<sup>16</sup>And from there they continued to Beer; that is the well of which the LORD said to Moses, “Gather the people together, so that I may give them water.” <sup>17</sup>Then Israel sang this song:

“Spring up, O well!—Sing to it!—  
<sup>18</sup>the well that the princes made, that the nobles of the people dug, with the scepter and with their staffs.”

And from the wilderness they went on to Mattanah, <sup>19</sup>and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth, <sup>20</sup>and from Bamoth to the valley lying in the region of Moab by the top of Pisgah that looks down on the desert.

King Sihon Defeated

<sup>21</sup>Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, <sup>22</sup>“Let me pass

through your land. We will not turn aside into field or vineyard. We will not drink the water of a well. We will go by the King’s Highway until we have passed through your territory.” <sup>23</sup>But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory. He gathered all his people together and went out against Israel to the wilderness and came to Jahaz and fought against Israel. <sup>24</sup>And Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as to the Ammonites, for the border of the Ammonites was strong. <sup>25</sup>And Israel took all these cities, and Israel settled in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all its villages. <sup>26</sup>For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon. <sup>27</sup>Therefore the ballad singers say,

“Come to Heshbon, let it be built;  
let the city of Sihon be established.

<sup>28</sup>For fire came out from Heshbon,  
flame from the city of Sihon.

It devoured Ar of Moab,  
and swallowed the heights of the Arnon.

<sup>29</sup>Woe to you, O Moab!  
You are undone, O people of Chemosh!

He has made his sons fugitives,  
and his daughters captives,  
to an Amorite king, Sihon.

<sup>30</sup>So we overthrew them;  
Heshbon, as far as Dibon, perished;  
and we laid waste as far as Nophah;  
fire spread as far as Medeba.”

**King Og Defeated**

<sup>31</sup>Thus Israel lived in the land of the Amorites. <sup>32</sup>And Moses sent to spy out Jazer, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who were there. <sup>33</sup>Then they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. And Og the king of Bashan came out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. <sup>34</sup>But the LORD said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have given him into your hand, and all his people, and his land. And you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon.” <sup>35</sup>So they defeated him and his sons and all his people, until he had no survivor left. And they possessed his land.

**New Testament Reading: Luke 21:20–38**

Jesus Foretells Destruction of Jerusalem

<sup>20</sup>“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. <sup>21</sup>Then 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, <sup>22</sup>for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. <sup>23</sup>Alas 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. <sup>24</sup>They 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.

The Coming of the Son of Man

<sup>25</sup>“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, <sup>26</sup>people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is

coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

<sup>29</sup>And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup>As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. <sup>31</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Watch Yourselves

<sup>34</sup>“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. <sup>35</sup>For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

<sup>37</sup>And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. <sup>38</sup>And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.

**Writing**

For that love of God is so great that we are able to have confidence on the Day of Judgment, on which the whole world will tremble. Is. 28:16: “Behold, I am laying in Zion for a foundation a Stone, a

tested Stone, a precious Cornerstone, of a sure foundation.” Therefore through the knowledge of this love we also have faith, so that we can pass muster at the judgment. Thus Christ also warns by means of the parable of the fig tree in Luke 21:28: “Look up, and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” This is what the blood of love which was shed for us does—the blood which is more precious than all the merits and deaths of all the saints. But the fact that we do not consider this fittingly and do not treat of this blood in a manner that is sufficiently fitting, this is due to our very education, by which we have been brought up in various ways ever since our childhood to observe human traditions and inventions. The devil knows this weakness of the flesh, namely, that we do not fittingly value the blood of Christ. Therefore if consciousness of a great sin weighs you down, comfort yourself with this blood of love. Surely the whole world does not grasp the tiniest syllable of the statement that God is love. No human religion can hold its own in the face of the judgment, but it is solely in the blood of Christ that we have confidence on the Day of Judgment.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Come, holy Fire, comfort true,  
 Grant us the will Your work to do  
 And in Your service to abide;  
 Let trials turn us not aside.  
 Lord, by Your pow’r prepare each heart,  
 And to our weakness strength impart  
 That bravely here we may contend,  
 Through life and death to You,

our Lord, ascend.

Alleluia, alleluia!

—Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord  
 (LSB 497:3)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L50)

### Pentecost

The Church lives and moves and has her being through the gracious inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Without God’s Spirit, no one could come to Christ or believe in Him. The fifty-day celebration of Easter ends with this joyous festival. The risen and ascended Savior has sent the Holy Spirit to be our Sanctifier, entering our hearts at Holy Baptism, nurturing us through the Word, and enabling us to understand the Gospel and to live a life that honors God and serves our neighbor.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
 XI 65–75

## MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Blessed is everyone who | fears the LORD,\*  
who walks | in his ways!
- <sup>2</sup> You shall eat the fruit of the labor | of  
your hands;\*  
you shall be blessed,  
and it shall be | well with you.
- <sup>3</sup> Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
with- | in your house;\*  
your children will be like olive shoots  
around your | table.
- <sup>4</sup> Behold, thus shall the | man be blessed\*  
who | fears the LORD.
- <sup>5</sup> The LORD bless you from | Zion!\*  
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days | of your life!
- <sup>6</sup> May you see your children's | children!\*  
Peace be upon | Israel!  
—Psalm 128

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 72*

### Old Testament Reading: Numbers 22:1–20

Balak Summons Balaam

<sup>1</sup>Then the people of Israel set out and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho. <sup>2</sup>And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. <sup>3</sup>And Moab was in great dread of the people, because they were many. Moab was overcome with fear of the people of Israel. <sup>4</sup>And Moab said to the elders of Midian, “This horde will now lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field.” So Balak the son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, <sup>5</sup>sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land

of the people of Amaw, to call him, saying, “Behold, a people has come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the earth, and they are dwelling opposite me. <sup>6</sup>Come now, curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”

<sup>7</sup>So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand. And they came to Balaam and gave him Balak’s message. <sup>8</sup>And he said to them, “Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD speaks to me.” So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. <sup>9</sup>And God came to Balaam and said, “Who are these men with you?” <sup>10</sup>And Balaam said to God, “Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, <sup>11</sup>‘Behold, a people has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Now come, curse them for me. Perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out.’” <sup>12</sup>God said to Balaam, “You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.” <sup>13</sup>So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, “Go to your own land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you.” <sup>14</sup>So the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak and said, “Balaam refuses to come with us.”

<sup>15</sup>Once again Balak sent princes, more in number and more honorable than these. <sup>16</sup>And they came to Balaam and said to him, “Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: ‘Let nothing hinder you from coming to me, <sup>17</sup>for I will surely do you great honor, and whatever you say to me I will do. Come, curse this people for me.’” <sup>18</sup>But Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak,

“Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the LORD my God to do less or more. <sup>19</sup>So you, too, please stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me.” <sup>20</sup>And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, “If the men have come to call you, rise, go with them; but only do what I tell you.”

### New Testament Reading: Luke 22:1–23

#### The Plot to Kill Jesus

<sup>1</sup>Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. <sup>2</sup>And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people.

#### Judas to Betray Jesus

<sup>3</sup>Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. <sup>4</sup>He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. <sup>5</sup>And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. <sup>6</sup>So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

#### The Passover with the Disciples

<sup>7</sup>Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.” <sup>9</sup>They said to him, “Where will you have us prepare it?” <sup>10</sup>He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters <sup>11</sup>and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my

disciples?’” <sup>12</sup>And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.”

<sup>13</sup>And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

#### Institution of the Lord’s Supper

<sup>14</sup>And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup>For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” <sup>17</sup>And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. <sup>18</sup>For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” <sup>19</sup>And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>20</sup>And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. <sup>21</sup>But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. <sup>22</sup>For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” <sup>23</sup>And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

### Writing

Scripture teaches that we are justified before God, through faith in Christ, when we believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. Now if the Mass takes away the sins of the living and the dead simply by performing it, justification comes by doing Masses, and not of faith. Scripture does not allow this.

But Christ commands us, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19). Therefore, the Mass was instituted so that those who

use the Sacrament should remember, in faith, the benefits they receive through Christ and how their anxious consciences are cheered and comforted. To remember Christ is to remember His benefits. It means to realize that they are truly offered to us. It is not enough only to remember history. (The Jewish people and the ungodly also remember this.) Therefore, the Mass is to be used for administering the Sacrament to those that need consolation. Ambrose says, “Because I always sin, I always need to take the medicine.”

Because the Mass is for the purpose of giving the Sacrament, we have Communion every holy day, and if anyone desires the Sacrament, we also offer it on other days, when it is given to all who ask for it. This custom is not new in the Church. . . . Chrysostom says “that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to the Communion and keeping back others.” It appears from the ancient council decisions that one person celebrated the Mass from whom all the other presbyters and deacons received the body of the Lord. The records of the decisions of the Council of Nicaea state, “Let the deacons, according to their order, receive the Holy Communion after the presbyters, from the bishop or from a presbyter.” Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:33, has this command in regard to Communion: “wait for one another” so that there may be a common participation.

—Augsburg Confession XXIV 28–39

## Hymnody

So let us keep the festival  
To which the Lord invites us;  
Christ is Himself the joy of all,  
The sun that warms and lights us.  
Now His grace to us imparts  
Eternal sunshine to our hearts;  
The night of sin is ended.  
Alleluia!

—Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong  
Bands (*LSB* 458:6)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, who gave Your Holy Spirit to the apostles, grant us that same Spirit that we may live in faith and abide in peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L51)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
XI 76–86

## TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### Psalmody

- <sup>8</sup> Understand, O dullest of the | people!\*  
Fools, when will | you be wise?
- <sup>9</sup> He who planted the ear, does | he not hear?\*
- He who formed the eye, does | he not see?
- <sup>10</sup> He who disciplines the nations,  
does he | not rebuke?\*
- He who teaches man | knowledge—
- <sup>11</sup> the LORD—knows the | thoughts of man,\*  
that they are | but a breath.

<sup>12</sup> Blessed is the man whom you  
discipline, | O LORD,\*  
and whom you teach out | of your law,  
<sup>13</sup> to give him rest from days of | trouble,\*  
until a pit is dug for the | wicked.  
<sup>14</sup> For the LORD will not forsake his | people;\*  
he will not abandon his | heritage;  
—Psalm 94:8–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 149*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Numbers 22:21–23:3**

<sup>21</sup>So Balaam rose in the morning and  
saddled his donkey and went with the  
princes of Moab.

Balaam’s Donkey and the Angel

<sup>22</sup>But God’s anger was kindled because  
he went, and the angel of the LORD took his  
stand in the way as his adversary. Now he was  
riding on the donkey, and his two servants  
were with him. <sup>23</sup>And the donkey saw the  
angel of the LORD standing in the road, with  
a drawn sword in his hand. And the donkey  
turned aside out of the road and went into  
the field. And Balaam struck the donkey, to  
turn her into the road. <sup>24</sup>Then the angel of  
the LORD stood in a narrow path between the  
vineyards, with a wall on either side. <sup>25</sup>And  
when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD,  
she pushed against the wall and pressed  
Balaam’s foot against the wall. So he struck  
her again. <sup>26</sup>Then the angel of the LORD went  
ahead and stood in a narrow place, where  
there was no way to turn either to the right or  
to the left. <sup>27</sup>When the donkey saw the angel  
of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam.  
And Balaam’s anger was kindled, and he  
struck the donkey with his staff. <sup>28</sup>Then the  
LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and

she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you,  
that you have struck me these three times?”

<sup>29</sup>And Balaam said to the donkey, “Because  
you have made a fool of me. I wish I had a  
sword in my hand, for then I would kill you.”

<sup>30</sup>And the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not  
your donkey, on which you have ridden all  
your life long to this day? Is it my habit to  
treat you this way?” And he said, “No.”

<sup>31</sup>Then the LORD opened the eyes of  
Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD  
standing in the way, with his drawn sword  
in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on  
his face. <sup>32</sup>And the angel of the LORD said  
to him, “Why have you struck your donkey  
these three times? Behold, I have come out  
to oppose you because your way is perverse  
before me. <sup>33</sup>The donkey saw me and turned  
aside before me these three times. If she had  
not turned aside from me, surely just now I  
would have killed you and let her live.” <sup>34</sup>Then  
Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, “I have  
sinned, for I did not know that you stood in  
the road against me. Now therefore, if it is  
evil in your sight, I will turn back.” <sup>35</sup>And the  
angel of the LORD said to Balaam, “Go with  
the men, but speak only the word that I tell  
you.” So Balaam went on with the princes of  
Balak.

<sup>36</sup>When Balak heard that Balaam had  
come, he went out to meet him at the city of  
Moab, on the border formed by the Arnon,  
at the extremity of the border. <sup>37</sup>And Balak  
said to Balaam, “Did I not send to you to call  
you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not  
able to honor you?” <sup>38</sup>Balaam said to Balak,  
“Behold, I have come to you! Have I now any  
power of my own to speak anything? The  
word that God puts in my mouth, that must  
I speak.” <sup>39</sup>Then Balaam went with Balak,  
and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. <sup>40</sup>And

Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent for Balaam and for the princes who were with him.

<sup>41</sup>And in the morning Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-baal, and from there he saw a fraction of the people.

Balaam's First Oracle

<sup>23:1</sup>And Balaam said to Balak, "Build for me here seven altars, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams." <sup>2</sup>Balak did as Balaam had said. And Balak and Balaam offered on each altar a bull and a ram. <sup>3</sup>And Balaam said to Balak, "Stand beside your burnt offering, and I will go. Perhaps the LORD will come to meet me, and whatever he shows me I will tell you." And he went to a bare height.

## New Testament Reading: Luke 22:24–46

Who Is the Greatest?

<sup>24</sup>A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. <sup>25</sup>And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. <sup>26</sup>But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. <sup>27</sup>For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

<sup>28</sup>"You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, <sup>29</sup>and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup>that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus Foretells Peter's Denial

<sup>31</sup>"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup>but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

<sup>33</sup>Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." <sup>34</sup>Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."

Scripture Must Be Fulfilled in Jesus

<sup>35</sup>And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." <sup>36</sup>He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. <sup>37</sup>For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about me has its fulfillment." <sup>38</sup>And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And he said to them, "It is enough."

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

<sup>39</sup>And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup>And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." <sup>41</sup>And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup>saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." <sup>43</sup>And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. <sup>44</sup>And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. <sup>45</sup>And when he

rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

**Writing**

Let our whole body, then, be preserved in Christ Jesus, and let everyone be subject to his neighbor, according to the special gift bestowed on him. Let the strong not despise the weak, and let the weak show respect to the strong. Let the rich man provide for the wants of the poor, and let the poor man bless God, because He has given him someone by whom his needs may be supplied. Let the wise man display his wisdom not by words but through good deeds. Let the humble not bear testimony to himself but leave someone else to witness about him. Let him who is pure in the flesh not grow proud of it and boast, knowing that someone else bestowed on him the gift of self-control. Let us consider, then, brothers, from what matter we were made—who and what manner of beings we came into the world, as it were from a grave and from utter darkness. He who made us and fashioned us, having prepared His bountiful gifts for us before we were born, introduced us into His world. . . .

These things therefore being known to us, and since we look into the depths of the divine knowledge, it is necessary to do all things in [their proper] order, which the Lord has commanded us to perform at stated times. . . . Let every one of you, brothers, give thanks to God in his own order, living in all good conscience, with becoming gravity, and not going beyond the rule of the ministry prescribed to him. . . .

The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ has done so from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Spirit, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the firstfruits of their labors, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterward believe.

—First Clement

**Hymnody**

Rise, my soul, to watch and pray;  
 From your sleep awaken!  
 Be not by the evil day  
 Unawares o’ertaken;  
 For the foe,  
 Well we know,  
 Is a harvest reaping  
 While the saints are sleeping.

—Rise, My Soul to Watch and Pray  
 (LSB 663:1)

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord Jesus, the two swords of the disciples were enough to show themselves as sinners, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah that You would be numbered with transgressors. Yet You promised that they would eat and drink with You at Your table in Your kingdom, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Help us to remember that You invite

transgressors to Your Holy Supper, where we are welcomed to receive the forgiveness of all our sins; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1026)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
XI 87–93

## WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### Psalmody

- <sup>19</sup> But you, O LORD, do not be | far off!\*
- O you my help, come quickly | to my aid!
- <sup>20</sup> Deliver my soul | from the sword,\*
- my precious life from the power | of  
the dog!
- <sup>21</sup> Save me from the mouth of the | lion!\*
- You have rescued me from the horns of  
the wild | oxen!
- <sup>22</sup> I will tell of your name to my | brothers,\*
- in the midst of the congregation  
I will | praise you:
- <sup>23</sup> You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you  
offspring of Jacob, glo- | rify him,\*
- and stand in awe of him, all you offspring  
of | Israel!
- <sup>24</sup> For he has not despised or abhorred the  
affliction of the afflicted, and he has not  
hidden his | face from him,\*
- but has heard, when he | cried to him.
- <sup>25</sup> From you comes my praise in the great  
congre- | gation;\*
- my vows I will perform before  
those who | fear him.

- <sup>26</sup> The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those  
who seek him shall | praise the LORD!\*
- May your hearts live for- | ever!
- Psalm 22:19–26

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 102*

### Old Testament Reading: Numbers 23:4–28

Balaam's First Oracle

<sup>4</sup>God met Balaam. And Balaam said to him, "I have arranged the seven altars and I have offered on each altar a bull and a ram." <sup>5</sup>And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, "Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak." <sup>6</sup>And he returned to him, and behold, he and all the princes of Moab were standing beside his burnt offering. <sup>7</sup>And Balaam took up his discourse and said,

"From Aram Balak has brought me,  
the king of Moab from the eastern  
mountains;

'Come, curse Jacob for me,  
and come, denounce Israel!'

<sup>8</sup>How can I curse whom God has not  
cursed?

How can I denounce whom the LORD  
has not denounced?

<sup>9</sup>For from the top of the crags I see him,  
from the hills I behold him;  
behold, a people dwelling alone,  
and not counting itself among the  
nations!

<sup>10</sup>Who can count the dust of Jacob  
or number the fourth part of Israel?  
Let me die the death of the upright,  
and let my end be like his!"

<sup>11</sup>And Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have done nothing

but bless them.”<sup>12</sup> And he answered and said, “Must I not take care to speak what the LORD puts in my mouth?”

Balaam’s Second Oracle

<sup>13</sup>And Balak said to him, “Please come with me to another place, from which you may see them. You shall see only a fraction of them and shall not see them all. Then curse them for me from there.”<sup>14</sup> And he took him to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.<sup>15</sup> Balaam said to Balak, “Stand here beside your burnt offering, while I meet the LORD over there.”<sup>16</sup> And the LORD met Balaam and put a word in his mouth and said, “Return to Balak, and thus shall you speak.”<sup>17</sup> And he came to him, and behold, he was standing beside his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said to him, “What has the LORD spoken?”

<sup>18</sup>And Balaam took up his discourse and said,

“Rise, Balak, and hear;  
 give ear to me, O son of Zippor:  
<sup>19</sup>God is not man, that he should lie,  
 or a son of man, that he should  
 change his mind.  
 Has he said, and will he not do it?  
 Or has he spoken,  
 and will he not fulfill it?

<sup>20</sup>Behold, I received a command to bless:  
 he has blessed,  
 and I cannot revoke it.

<sup>21</sup>He has not beheld misfortune in Jacob,  
 nor has he seen trouble in Israel.

The LORD their God is with them,  
 and the shout of a king  
 is among them.

<sup>22</sup>God brings them out of Egypt  
 and is for them like the horns  
 of the wild ox.

<sup>23</sup>For there is no enchantment  
 against Jacob,

no divination against Israel;  
 now it shall be said of Jacob and Israel,  
 ‘What has God wrought!’

<sup>24</sup>Behold, a people! As a lioness it rises up  
 and as a lion it lifts itself;

it does not lie down until it has devoured  
 the prey

and drunk the blood of the slain.”

<sup>25</sup>And Balak said to Balaam, “Do not curse them at all, and do not bless them at all.”<sup>26</sup> But Balaam answered Balak, “Did I not tell you, ‘All that the LORD says, that I must do’?”<sup>27</sup> And Balak said to Balaam, “Come now, I will take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God that you may curse them for me from there.”<sup>28</sup> So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, which overlooks the desert.

### New Testament Reading: Luke 22:47–71

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

<sup>47</sup>While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him,<sup>48</sup> but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”<sup>49</sup> And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?”<sup>50</sup> And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

<sup>51</sup>But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him.<sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?<sup>53</sup> When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not

lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”

#### Peter Denies Jesus

<sup>54</sup>Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house, and Peter was following at a distance. <sup>55</sup>And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. <sup>56</sup>Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, “This man also was with him.” <sup>57</sup>But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” <sup>58</sup>And a little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not.” <sup>59</sup>And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.” <sup>60</sup>But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. <sup>61</sup>And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” <sup>62</sup>And he went out and wept bitterly.

#### Jesus Is Mocked

<sup>63</sup>Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. <sup>64</sup>They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, “Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?” <sup>65</sup>And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.

#### Jesus Before the Council

<sup>66</sup>When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, <sup>67</sup>“If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them,

“If I tell you, you will not believe, <sup>68</sup>and if I ask you, you will not answer. <sup>69</sup>But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” <sup>70</sup>So they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” <sup>71</sup>Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.”

### Writing

That repentance itself—which beyond all doubt is an action of the will, is certainly shaped and brought into action by the mercy and help of the Lord, is asserted by the blessed Ambrose in the following passage in the ninth book of the same work: “Good are the tears which wash away sin. They upon whom the Lord at last turns and looks, bewail. Peter denied Him first, and did not weep, because the Lord had not turned and looked upon him. He denied Him a second time, and still did not weep, because the Lord had not yet turned and looked upon him. The third time also he denied Him, Jesus turned and looked, and then he wept most bitterly.”

Let these persons read the Gospel. Let them consider how the Lord Jesus was at that moment inside, having a hearing before the chief priest, while the apostle Peter was outside and down in the hall, sitting at one time with the servants at the fire, at another time standing, as the most accurate and consistent narrative of the evangelists shows. It cannot, therefore, be said that it was with His bodily eyes that the Lord turned and looked upon him by a visible and noticeable admonition. That, then, which is described in the words “The Lord turned and looked upon Peter” was effected internally; it was worked in the mind, worked in the will. In mercy

the Lord silently and secretly approached, touched the heart, recalled the memory of the past, with His own internal grace visited Peter, stirred and brought out into external tears the feelings of his inner man. Behold in what manner God is present with His help to our wills and actions; behold how “He works in us both to will and to do.”

—Augustine

### Hymnody

Paschal Lamb, by God appointed,  
 All our sins on Thee were laid;  
 By almighty love anointed,  
 Thou hast full atonement made.  
 All Thy people are forgiven  
 Through the virtue of Thy blood;  
 Opened is the gate of heaven,  
 Reconciled are we with God.

—Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus  
 (LSB 531:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, You fulfilled Your promise by sending the gift of the Holy Spirit to unite disciples of all nations in the cross and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ. By the preaching of the Gospel spread this gift to the ends of the earth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L49)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 94–96

## THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the | wicked,\*  
 nor stands in the way of sinners,  
 nor sits in the seat of | scoffers;  
<sup>2</sup> but his delight is in the law | of the LORD,\*  
 and on his law he meditates | day  
 and night.  
<sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams  
 of water that yields its fruit in its season,  
 and its leaf does not | wither.\*  
 In all that he does, he | prospers.  
<sup>4</sup> The wicked | are not so,\*  
 but are like chaff that the wind | drives  
 away.  
<sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand  
 in the | judgment,\*  
 nor sinners in the congregation  
 of the | righteous;  
<sup>6</sup> for the LORD knows the way  
 of the | righteous,\*  
 but the way of the wicked will | perish.  
 —Psalm 1

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 37*

### Old Testament Reading: Numbers 24:1–25

Balaam’s Third Oracle

<sup>1</sup>When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness. <sup>2</sup>And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. And the Spirit of God came upon him, <sup>3</sup>and he took up his discourse and said,

“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,  
 the oracle of the man  
 whose eye is opened,  
<sup>4</sup>the oracle of him who hears the words  
 of God,  
 who sees the vision of the Almighty,  
 falling down with his eyes  
 uncovered:

<sup>5</sup>How lovely are your tents, O Jacob,  
 your encampments, O Israel!

<sup>6</sup>Like palm groves that stretch afar,  
 like gardens beside a river,  
 like aloes that the LORD has planted,  
 like cedar trees beside the waters.

<sup>7</sup>Water shall flow from his buckets,  
 and his seed shall be in many waters;  
 his king shall be higher than Agag,  
 and his kingdom shall be exalted.

<sup>8</sup>God brings him out of Egypt  
 and is for him like the horns  
 of the wild ox;

he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries,  
 and shall break their bones in pieces  
 and pierce them through  
 with his arrows.

<sup>9</sup>He crouched, he lay down like a lion  
 and like a lioness; who will rouse  
 him up?

Blessed are those who bless you,  
 and cursed are those who curse you.”

<sup>10</sup>And Balak’s anger was kindled against  
 Balaam, and he struck his hands together.  
 And Balak said to Balaam, “I called you to  
 curse my enemies, and behold, you have  
 blessed them these three times. <sup>11</sup>Therefore  
 now flee to your own place. I said, ‘I will  
 certainly honor you,’ but the LORD has held  
 you back from honor.” <sup>12</sup>And Balaam said to  
 Balak, “Did I not tell your messengers whom  
 you sent to me, <sup>13</sup>If Balak should give me his

house full of silver and gold, I would not be  
 able to go beyond the word of the LORD, to  
 do either good or bad of my own will. What  
 the LORD speaks, that will I speak?” <sup>14</sup>And  
 now, behold, I am going to my people. Come,  
 I will let you know what this people will do  
 to your people in the latter days.”

Balaam’s Final Oracle

<sup>15</sup>And he took up his discourse and said,

“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,  
 the oracle of the man  
 whose eye is opened,

<sup>16</sup>the oracle of him who hears the words  
 of God,

and knows the knowledge  
 of the Most High,  
 who sees the vision of the Almighty,  
 falling down with his eyes  
 uncovered:

<sup>17</sup>I see him, but not now;

I behold him, but not near:  
 a star shall come out of Jacob,  
 and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;  
 it shall crush the forehead of Moab  
 and break down all the sons of Sheth.

<sup>18</sup>Edom shall be dispossessed;  
 Seir also, his enemies,  
 shall be dispossessed.

Israel is doing valiantly.  
<sup>19</sup>And one from Jacob shall exercise  
 dominion

and destroy the survivors of cities!”

<sup>20</sup>Then he looked on Amalek and took up  
 his discourse and said,

“Amalek was the first among the nations,  
 but its end is utter destruction.”

<sup>21</sup>And he looked on the Kenite, and took  
 up his discourse and said,

“Enduring is your dwelling place,  
and your nest is set in the rock.

<sup>22</sup>Nevertheless, Kain shall be burned  
when Asshur takes you  
away captive.”

<sup>23</sup>And he took up his discourse and said,

“Alas, who shall live when God does this?”

<sup>24</sup>But ships shall come from Kittim  
and shall afflict Asshur and Eber;  
and he too shall come  
to utter destruction.”

<sup>25</sup>Then Balaam rose and went back to his  
place. And Balak also went his way.

### **New Testament Reading: Luke 23:1–25**

#### Jesus Before Pilate

<sup>1</sup>Then the whole company of them arose  
and brought him before Pilate. <sup>2</sup>And they  
began to accuse him, saying, “We found this  
man misleading our nation and forbidding  
us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that  
he himself is Christ, a king.” <sup>3</sup>And Pilate  
asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”  
And he answered him, “You have said so.”  
<sup>4</sup>Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the  
crowds, “I find no guilt in this man.” <sup>5</sup>But  
they were urgent, saying, “He stirs up the  
people, teaching throughout all Judea, from  
Galilee even to this place.”

#### Jesus Before Herod

<sup>6</sup>When Pilate heard this, he asked  
whether the man was a Galilean. <sup>7</sup>And when  
he learned that he belonged to Herod’s  
jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who  
was himself in Jerusalem at that time. <sup>8</sup>When  
Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he  
had long desired to see him, because he had  
heard about him, and he was hoping to see

some sign done by him. <sup>9</sup>So he questioned  
him at some length, but he made no answer.

<sup>10</sup>The chief priests and the scribes stood by,  
vehemently accusing him. <sup>11</sup>And Herod with  
his soldiers treated him with contempt and  
mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid  
clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. <sup>12</sup>And  
Herod and Pilate became friends with each  
other that very day, for before this they had  
been at enmity with each other.

<sup>13</sup>Pilate then called together the chief  
priests and the rulers and the people, <sup>14</sup>and  
said to them, “You brought me this man as  
one who was misleading the people. And  
after examining him before you, behold, I  
did not find this man guilty of any of your  
charges against him. <sup>15</sup>Neither did Herod,  
for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing  
deserving death has been done by him. <sup>16</sup>I  
will therefore punish and release him.”

#### Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

<sup>18</sup>But they all cried out together, “Away  
with this man, and release to us Barabbas”—  
<sup>19</sup>a man who had been thrown into prison  
for an insurrection started in the city and  
for murder. <sup>20</sup>Pilate addressed them once  
more, desiring to release Jesus, <sup>21</sup>but they  
kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” <sup>22</sup>A  
third time he said to them, “Why, what evil  
has he done? I have found in him no guilt  
deserving death. I will therefore punish  
and release him.” <sup>23</sup>But they were urgent,  
demanding with loud cries that he should  
be crucified. And their voices prevailed. <sup>24</sup>So  
Pilate decided that their demand should  
be granted. <sup>25</sup>He released the man who had  
been thrown into prison for insurrection  
and murder, for whom they asked, but he  
delivered Jesus over to their will.

## Writing

The deeper we enter the Lententide, the more intense becomes the struggle between sin and righteousness, whether it be granted to us to see it revealed in our Lord's suffering for us, or in the searchlight upon ourselves. The nearer we draw to the Cross, the more distinct sin becomes in its awful guilt and consequences. "Who is on the Lord's side?" There is no neutrality, no middle ground in the allegiances to the service of Christ, and it must be repeated, there cannot be a divided, nor an unpossessed heart! The Kingdom of Light and the kingdom of evil, of God and of the devil, are sharply contrasted. Each has its distinctive marks. Each has its powers. Each makes its appeal and each claims its followers. Slowly and deliberately, in order that every word may sink into the soul, Our Lord says: "He—that—is—not—with—Me—is—against—Me"! Think of the double and low standards of morality so prevalent in our modern age, the winking at wrong, the absorption in trivial things, the indifference in Religion, and that self-satisfying, conventional religion which so many have fashioned for themselves. And then think of Christ, who loved and gave, bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Turn your eyes toward the Lord, for He shall pluck your feet out of the net. According to this promise, the child of God pleads with His heavenly Father, that He would look upon his every need and stretch forth the right hand of His Majesty and be his defense against all enemies.

—Paul Zeller Strodach

## Hymnody

They rise and needs will have  
My dear Lord made away;  
A murderer they save,  
The Prince of Life they slay.  
Yet cheerful He  
To suff'ring goes  
That He His foes  
From thence might free.

—My Song Is Love Unknown  
(LSB 430:5)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God and Father, You sent Your Son to take our nature upon Himself and to suffer death on the cross that all should follow the example of His great humility. Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of our Savior, Jesus Christ, in His patience and also have our portion in His resurrection; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1027)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
XII 1–27

## FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST

## Psalmody

<sup>8</sup> Arise, O LORD, and go to your | resting  
place,\*

you and the ark | of your might.

<sup>9</sup> Let your priests be clothed  
with | righteousness,\*

and let your saints | shout for joy.

<sup>10</sup>For the sake of your servant | David,\*  
do not turn away the face  
of your a- | nointed one.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD swore to David a sure oath from  
which he will | not turn back:\*  
“One of the sons of your body  
I will set | on your throne.

<sup>12</sup>If your sons keep my covenant and my  
testimonies that I shall | teach them,\*  
their sons also forever shall sit | on your  
throne.”

—Psalm 132:8–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 38*

### Old Testament Reading: Numbers 27:12–23

Joshua to Succeed Moses

<sup>12</sup>The LORD said to Moses, “Go up into  
this mountain of Abarim and see the land  
that I have given to the people of Israel.

<sup>13</sup>When you have seen it, you also shall be  
gathered to your people, as your brother  
Aaron was, <sup>14</sup>because you rebelled against  
my word in the wilderness of Zin when the  
congregation quarreled, failing to uphold  
me as holy at the waters before their eyes.”

(These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh  
in the wilderness of Zin.) <sup>15</sup>Moses spoke to  
the LORD, saying, <sup>16</sup>“Let the LORD, the God

of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over  
the congregation <sup>17</sup>who shall go out before  
them and come in before them, who shall  
lead them out and bring them in, that the  
congregation of the LORD may not be as  
sheep that have no shepherd.” <sup>18</sup>So the LORD  
said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a  
man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand  
on him. <sup>19</sup>Make him stand before Eleazar the  
priest and all the congregation, and you shall  
commission him in their sight. <sup>20</sup>You shall

invest him with some of your authority, that  
all the congregation of the people of Israel  
may obey. <sup>21</sup>And he shall stand before Eleazar  
the priest, who shall inquire for him by the  
judgment of the Urim before the LORD. At  
his word they shall go out, and at his word  
they shall come in, both he and all the people  
of Israel with him, the whole congregation.”

<sup>22</sup>And Moses did as the LORD commanded  
him. He took Joshua and made him stand  
before Eleazar the priest and the whole  
congregation, <sup>23</sup>and he laid his hands on him  
and commissioned him as the LORD directed  
through Moses.

### New Testament Reading: Luke 23:26–56

The Crucifixion

<sup>26</sup>And as they led him away, they seized  
one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in  
from the country, and laid on him the cross,  
to carry it behind Jesus. <sup>27</sup>And there followed  
him a great multitude of the people and of  
women who were mourning and lamenting  
for him. <sup>28</sup>But turning to them Jesus said,  
“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for  
me, but weep for yourselves and for your  
children. <sup>29</sup>For behold, the days are coming  
when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren  
and the wombs that never bore and the  
breasts that never nursed!’ <sup>30</sup>Then they will  
begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’  
and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ <sup>31</sup>For if they do  
these things when the wood is green, what  
will happen when it is dry?”

<sup>32</sup>Two others, who were criminals, were  
led away to be put to death with him. <sup>33</sup>And  
when they came to the place that is called  
The Skull, there they crucified him, and the  
criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

<sup>34</sup>And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. <sup>35</sup>And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" <sup>36</sup>The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine <sup>37</sup>and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" <sup>38</sup>There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

<sup>39</sup>One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup>But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" <sup>41</sup>And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup>And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." <sup>43</sup>And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

#### The Death of Jesus

<sup>44</sup>It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, <sup>45</sup>while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. <sup>46</sup>Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. <sup>47</sup>Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" <sup>48</sup>And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. <sup>49</sup>And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

#### Jesus Is Buried

<sup>50</sup>Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, <sup>51</sup>who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. <sup>52</sup>This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>53</sup>Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. <sup>54</sup>It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. <sup>55</sup>The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. <sup>56</sup>Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

#### Writing

Dear friends, so that you might also have a short report about our dearly beloved father, Dr. Martin's, blessed parting, I will give it. When he noticed that his hour had come, he prayed thusly:

O my heavenly Father, one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God of all comfort, I thank you that you have revealed to me your dear Son, Jesus Christ, in whom I believe, whom I have preached and confessed, whom I have loved and praised, whom the loathsome pope and all the godless revile, persecute, and blaspheme. I implore you, my Lord Jesus Christ, let my little soul be commended to you. O heavenly Father, although I must leave this body and be snatched away from this life, I am, nevertheless, certain that

I will remain with you eternally and that no one can tear me out of your hands.

And then he said three times:

Into your hands I commend my spirit. You have redeemed me, you faithful God.

Also John 3:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son so that all who believe in him will not be lost but have eternal life.

Then he folded his hands and gave up his spirit to Christ in grand silence. Therefore we should also justly rejoice with him, as much as we are able to do so in our grief.

—Johannes Bugenhagen

### Hymnody

Thou hast suffered great affliction  
And hast borne it patiently,  
Even death by crucifixion,  
Fully to atone for me;  
Thou didst choose to be tormented  
That my doom should be prevented.  
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,  
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

—Christ, the Life of All the Living  
(LSB 420:6)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, You reign among us by the preaching of Your cross. Forgive Your people their offenses that we, being governed by Your bountiful goodness, may enter at last into Your eternal paradise; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C87)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XII 28–38

## SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### Psalmody

<sup>6</sup>The heavens proclaim his | righteousness,\*  
and all the peoples see his | glory.

<sup>7</sup>All worshipers of images are put to shame,  
who make their boast in worthless | idols;\*  
worship him, | all you gods!

<sup>8</sup>Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of  
Ju- | dah rejoice,\*  
because of your judgments, | O LORD.

<sup>9</sup>For you, O LORD, are most high over | all  
the earth;\*  
you are exalted far a- | bove all gods.

<sup>10</sup>O you who love the LORD, hate | evil!\*  
He preserves the lives of his saints; he  
delivers them from the hand  
of the | wicked.

<sup>11</sup>Light is sown for the | righteous,\*  
and joy for the up- | right in heart.

<sup>12</sup>Rejoice in the LORD, O you | righteous,\*  
and give thanks to his | holy name!  
—Psalm 97:6–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 85*

### Old Testament Reading: Numbers 32:1–6; 16–27

Reuben and Gad Settle in Gilead

<sup>1</sup>Now the people of Reuben and the people of Gad had a very great number of livestock. And they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, and behold, the place was a place for livestock. <sup>2</sup>So the people of

Gad and the people of Reuben came and said to Moses and to Eleazar the priest and to the chiefs of the congregation, <sup>3</sup>“Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon, <sup>4</sup>the land that the LORD struck down before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.” <sup>5</sup>And they said, “If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants for a possession. Do not take us across the Jordan.”

<sup>6</sup>But Moses said to the people of Gad and to the people of Reuben, “Shall your brothers go to the war while you sit here?” . . .

<sup>16</sup>Then they came near to him and said, “We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, <sup>17</sup>but we will take up arms, ready to go before the people of Israel, until we have brought them to their place. And our little ones shall live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. <sup>18</sup>We will not return to our homes until each of the people of Israel has gained his inheritance. <sup>19</sup>For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has come to us on this side of the Jordan to the east.” <sup>20</sup>So Moses said to them, “If you will do this, if you will take up arms to go before the LORD for the war, <sup>21</sup>and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before the LORD, until he has driven out his enemies from before him <sup>22</sup>and the land is subdued before the LORD; then after that you shall return and be free of obligation to the LORD and to Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. <sup>23</sup>But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out. <sup>24</sup>Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep, and do what you have promised.”

<sup>25</sup>And the people of Gad and the people of Reuben said to Moses, “Your servants will do as my lord commands. <sup>26</sup>Our little ones, our wives, our livestock, and all our cattle shall remain there in the cities of Gilead, <sup>27</sup>but your servants will pass over, every man who is armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord orders.”

### **New Testament Reading: Luke 24:1–27**

#### The Resurrection

<sup>1</sup>But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. <sup>2</sup>And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup>While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. <sup>5</sup>And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup>He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup>that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” <sup>8</sup>And they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup>and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup>Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, <sup>11</sup>but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup>But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

## On the Road to Emmaus

<sup>13</sup>That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. <sup>16</sup>But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” <sup>19</sup>And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” <sup>25</sup>And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” <sup>27</sup>And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

## Writing

We will present here Luther’s own words, in order that God’s Church may be guarded in the best way against this error:

[Zwingli] calls it *alloeosis* when something is said about the divinity of Christ which after all belongs to His humanity, or vice versa—for example, in Luke 24[:26], “Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and so enter into His glory?” Here he [Zwingli] performs a sleight-of-hand trick and substitutes the human nature for Christ. Beware, beware, I say, of this *alloeosis*, for it is the devil’s mask since it will finally construct a kind of Christ after whom I would not want to be a Christian, that is, a Christ who is and does no more in His passion and His life than any other ordinary saint. For if I believe that only the human nature suffered for me, then Christ would be a poor Savior for me, in fact, He Himself would need a Savior. In short, it is indescribable what the devil attempts with this *alloeosis*! [LW 37:209–20]

And shortly afterward:

Now if the old witch, Lady Reason, *alloeosis*’ grandmother, should say that the Deity surely cannot suffer and die, then you must answer and say: That is true, but since the divinity and humanity are one person in Christ, the Scriptures ascribe to the divinity, because of this personal union, all that happens to humanity, and vice versa. And in

reality it is so. Indeed, you must say that the person (pointing to Christ) suffers, and dies. But this person is truly God, and therefore it is correct to say: the Son of God suffers. Although, so to speak, the one part (namely, the divinity) does not suffer, nevertheless the person, who is God, suffers in the other part (namely, in the humanity). [LW 37:210]

For the Son of God truly is crucified for us, i.e., this person who is God. For that is what He is—this person, I say, is crucified according to His humanity. [LW 37:211]  
—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 38–42

### Hymnody

It was a strange and dreadful strife  
When life and death contended;  
The victory remained with life,  
The reign of death was ended.  
Holy Scripture plainly saith  
That death is swallowed up by death,  
Its sting is lost forever.  
Alleluia!

—Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong  
Bands (*LSB* 458:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Merciful Lord, through the angels, You called the women at the tomb to remember that the Christ must be delivered into the hands of the sinful and be crucified and on the third day be raised from the dead. Help us to remember that it is only through suffering that we enter into glory, and that in our sufferings we participate in the sufferings of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1028)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord  
XII 39–40

## THE HOLY TRINITY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> God is our ref- | uge and strength,\*  
a very present help in | trouble.
- <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear though the | earth  
gives way,\*  
though the mountains be moved into the  
heart | of the sea,
- <sup>3</sup> though its waters | roar and foam,\*  
though the mountains tremble at  
its | swelling.
- <sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the  
cit- | y of God,\*  
the holy habitation of the | Most High.
- <sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of her; she shall | not be  
moved;\*  
God will help her when | morning dawns.
- <sup>6</sup> The nations rage, the kingdoms | totter;\*  
he utters his voice, the | earth melts.
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is | with us;\*  
the God of Jacob is our | fortress.  
—Psalm 46:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 46*

### Old Testament Reading: Numbers 35:9–30

Cities of Refuge

- <sup>9</sup>And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
- <sup>10</sup>“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, <sup>11</sup>then you shall select cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the

manslayer who kills any person without intent may flee there. <sup>12</sup>The cities shall be for you a refuge from the avenger, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the congregation for judgment. <sup>13</sup>And the cities that you give shall be your six cities of refuge. <sup>14</sup>You shall give three cities beyond the Jordan, and three cities in the land of Canaan, to be cities of refuge. <sup>15</sup>These six cities shall be for refuge for the people of Israel, and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them, that anyone who kills any person without intent may flee there.

<sup>16</sup>“But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a murderer. The murderer shall be put to death. <sup>17</sup>And if he struck him down with a stone tool that could cause death, and he died, he is a murderer. The murderer shall be put to death. <sup>18</sup>Or if he struck him down with a wooden tool that could cause death, and he died, he is a murderer. The murderer shall be put to death. <sup>19</sup>The avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death. <sup>20</sup>And if he pushed him out of hatred or hurled something at him, lying in wait, so that he died, <sup>21</sup>or in enmity struck him down with his hand, so that he died, then he who struck the blow shall be put to death. He is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

<sup>22</sup>“But if he pushed him suddenly without enmity, or hurled anything on him without lying in wait <sup>23</sup>or used a stone that could cause death, and without seeing him dropped it on him, so that he died, though he was not his enemy and did not seek his harm, <sup>24</sup>then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood, in accordance with these rules. <sup>25</sup>And

the congregation shall rescue the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge to which he had fled, and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. <sup>26</sup>But if the manslayer shall at any time go beyond the boundaries of his city of refuge to which he fled, <sup>27</sup>and the avenger of blood finds him outside the boundaries of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood. <sup>28</sup>For he must remain in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest, but after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession. <sup>29</sup>And these things shall be for a statute and rule for you throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

<sup>30</sup>“If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses. But no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.”

### **New Testament Reading: Luke 24: 28–53**

[On the Road to Emmaus]

<sup>28</sup>So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, <sup>29</sup>but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” <sup>33</sup>And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and

those who were with them gathered together, <sup>34</sup>saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

<sup>36</sup>As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” <sup>37</sup>But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. <sup>38</sup>And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup>See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” <sup>40</sup>And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. <sup>41</sup>And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” <sup>42</sup>They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup>and he took it and ate before them.

<sup>44</sup>Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

The Ascension

<sup>50</sup>Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. <sup>51</sup>While he blessed them, he parted from

them and was carried up into heaven.

<sup>52</sup>And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, <sup>53</sup>and were continually in the temple blessing God.

*Additional Reading: Acts 1:1–7:60*

## Writing

Oh, that every one of us would therefore let himself be brought to faith in the promises once given him in his Baptism! You who do not believe though you have been baptized, what riches of grace and salvation God has given you already, yet you do not consider or desire them! You belong in God’s kingdom yet willfully want to remain in the kingdom of darkness! The dove of the Holy Spirit has brought you, like an olive branch of peace, into the ark of the Christian Church, but you would rather wither and fade. Oh, open your eyes and return to your Baptism! Then God will be your God and Father again, your sins will be drowned in the sea of grace, and your Baptism will be the door to heaven.

But you who indeed believe, though in weakness, know this: you have in your Baptism a glorious means of strengthening. Consider this: even if everything becomes doubtful and uncertain, your Baptism stands fast. It happened once, and God does not go back on His Word. There God has, so to speak, made Himself your captive. Only do not let Him go; do not let your hand of faith let go of His covenant of grace. *He cannot leave you.*

What He has so dearly spoken

Never shall by Him be broken;  
Firmly stands His covenant.  
So let not your faith be stifled  
Or by flesh and Satan rifled;  
God's hand holds you confident.

—C. F. W. Walther

### Hymnody

Triune God, be Thou our stay;  
O let us perish never!  
Cleanse us from our sins, we pray,  
And grant us life forever.  
Keep us from the evil one;  
Uphold our faith most holy,  
And let us trust Thee solely  
With humble hearts and lowly.  
Let us put God's armor on,  
With all true Christians running  
Our heav'nly race and shunning  
The devil's wiles and cunning.  
Amen, amen! This be done;  
So sing we, "Alleluia!"

—Triune God, Be Thou Our Stay  
(LSB 505:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, You have given us grace to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity by the confession of a true faith and to worship the Unity in the power of the Divine Majesty. Keep us steadfast in this faith and defend us from all adversities; for You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, live and reign, one God, now and forever. (L52)

### The Holy Trinity

Having celebrated the greatest event in God's history of salvation, the death and resurrection of the Son of God, we pause a bit at the Feast of the Holy Trinity to consider

the essence of God. Certainly the essence of God is beyond our weak comprehension, but He has graciously revealed Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we want to summarize all the Holy Scripture says about God as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, we call Him the Holy Trinity. Even beyond the glorious summary of the persons and work of God found in the Creeds, to speak of God as the Holy Trinity says at one time all the many things that the Scriptures say about God. Our worship never ceases confessing our faith in the triune God and giving glory 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.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

The Three Universal or Ecumenical Creeds

# THE TIME OF THE CHURCH

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18 MAY

## Psalmody

- <sup>6</sup> Give ear, O Lord, | to my prayer;\*  
listen to my | plea for grace.
- <sup>7</sup> In the day of my trouble I call up- | on you,\*  
for you | answer me.
- <sup>8</sup> There is none like you among the  
gods, | O Lord,\*  
nor are there any | works like yours.
- <sup>9</sup> All the nations you have made shall come  
and worship before you, | O Lord,\*  
and shall glori- | fy your name.
- <sup>10</sup> For you are great and do | wondrous  
things;\*  
you a- | lone are God.
- <sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O LORD,  
that I may walk | in your truth;\*  
unite my heart to | fear your name.
- <sup>12</sup> I give thanks to you, O Lord my God,  
with | my whole heart,\*  
and I will glorify your name for- | ever.
- <sup>13</sup> For great is your steadfast | love toward me;\*  
you have delivered my soul from the  
depths | of Sheol.  
—Psalm 86:6–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 86*

## Old Testament Reading: Song of Solomon 1:1–2:7

<sup>1</sup>The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

The Bride Confesses Her Love

### Bride

<sup>2</sup>Let him kiss me with the kisses  
of his mouth!

For your love is better than wine;  
<sup>3</sup>your anointing oils are fragrant;  
your name is oil poured out;  
therefore virgins love you.

<sup>4</sup>Draw me after you; let us run.  
The king has brought me  
into his chambers.

### Chorus of Women

We will exult and rejoice in you;  
we will extol your love more than wine;  
rightly do they love you.

### Bride

<sup>5</sup>I am very dark, but lovely,  
O daughters of Jerusalem,  
like the tents of Kedar,  
like the curtains of Solomon.

<sup>6</sup>Do not gaze at me because I am dark,  
because the sun has looked upon me.

My mother's sons were angry with me;  
they made me keeper of the vineyards,  
but my own vineyard I have not kept!

<sup>7</sup>Tell me, you whom my soul loves,  
where you pasture your flock,  
where you make it lie down at noon;

for why should I be like one who veils herself  
beside the flocks of your companions?

Solomon and His Bride Delight in Each Other

**Groom**

<sup>8</sup>If you do not know,  
O most beautiful among women,  
follow in the tracks of the flock,  
and pasture your young goats  
beside the shepherds' tents.

<sup>9</sup>I compare you, my love,  
to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots.

<sup>10</sup>Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,  
your neck with strings of jewels.

**Chorus of Women**

<sup>11</sup>We will make for you ornaments of gold,  
studded with silver.

**Bride**

<sup>12</sup>While the king was on his couch,  
my nard gave forth its fragrance.

<sup>13</sup>My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh  
that lies between my breasts.

<sup>14</sup>My beloved is to me a cluster  
of henna blossoms  
in the vineyards of Engedi.

**Groom**

<sup>15</sup>Behold, you are beautiful, my love;  
behold, you are beautiful;  
your eyes are doves.

**Bride**

<sup>16</sup>Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved,  
truly delightful.

Our couch is green;

<sup>17</sup>the beams of our house are cedar;  
our rafters are pine.

<sup>2:1</sup>I am a rose of Sharon,  
a lily of the valleys.

**Groom**

<sup>2</sup>As a lily among brambles,  
so is my love among the young women.

**Bride**

<sup>3</sup>As an apple tree among the trees  
of the forest,  
so is my beloved among the young men.

With great delight I sat in his shadow,  
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

<sup>4</sup>He brought me to the banqueting house,  
and his banner over me was love.

<sup>5</sup>Sustain me with raisins;  
refresh me with apples,  
for I am sick with love.

<sup>6</sup>His left hand is under my head,  
and his right hand embraces me!

<sup>7</sup>I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
by the gazelles or the does of the field,  
that you not stir up or awaken love  
until it pleases.

**New Testament Reading: John 5:1–18**

The Healing at the Pool on the Sabbath

<sup>1</sup>After this there was a feast of the Jews,  
and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. <sup>3</sup>In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. <sup>5</sup>One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup>When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” <sup>7</sup>The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” <sup>8</sup>Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” <sup>9</sup>And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. <sup>10</sup>So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for

you to take up your bed.”<sup>10</sup> But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’”<sup>11</sup> They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk?’”<sup>12</sup> Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.<sup>13</sup> Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.”<sup>14</sup> The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.<sup>15</sup> And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.<sup>16</sup> But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

Jesus Is Equal with God

<sup>18</sup>This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

## Writing

It is a great error for anyone to think that it is by the authority of the Church that we observe the Lord’s Day as something necessary, instead of the Sabbath Day. Scripture itself has abolished the Sabbath Day [Colossians 2:16–17]. It teaches that since the Gospel has been revealed, all the ceremonies of Moses can be omitted. Yet, because it was necessary to appoint a certain day for the people to know when they ought to come together, it appears that the Church designated the Lord’s Day [Revelation 1:10] for this purpose. This day seems to have been chosen all the more for this additional reason: so people might have an example

of Christian freedom and might know that keeping neither the Sabbath nor any other day is necessary.

There are monstrous debates about changing the law, ceremonies of the new law, and changing the Sabbath Day. They have all sprung from the false belief that in the Church there must be something similar to the services set forth in Leviticus [1–7], and that Christ had commissioned the apostles and bishops to come up with new ceremonies necessary to salvation. These errors crept into the Church when the righteousness that comes through faith was not taught clearly enough. Some debate whether or not keeping the Lord’s Day is not a divine right, but similar to it. They prescribe the extent to which it is lawful to work on holy days. What else are such disputes except traps for the conscience? Even when they try to modify the traditions, nobody will understand the modifications as long as the opinion remains that these traditions are necessary and must remain. There the righteousness of faith and Christian freedom is not known.

—Augsburg Confession XXVIII 58–64

## Hymnody

This day at earth’s creation  
The light first had its birth;  
This day for our salvation  
Christ rose from depths of earth;  
This day our Lord victorious  
The Spirit sent from heav’n,  
And thus this day most glorious  
A threefold light was giv’n.

—O Day of Rest and Gladness  
(LSB 906:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L46)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Preface to the Christian Book of Concord 1–4

19 MAY

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly | people,\*  
from the deceitful and unjust man  
de- | liver me!

<sup>2</sup>For you are the God in whom I take refuge;  
why have you re- | jected me?\*

Why do I go about mourning because  
of the oppression of the | enemy?

<sup>3</sup>Send out your light and your truth;  
let them | lead me;\*

let them bring me to your holy hill  
and to your | dwelling!

<sup>4</sup>Then I will go to the altar of God,  
to God my ex- | ceeding joy,\*  
and I will praise you with the lyre,  
O | God, my God.

<sup>5</sup>Why are you cast down, O my soul, and  
why are you in turmoil with- | in me?\*

Hope in God; for I shall again praise  
him, my salvation | and my God.

—Psalm 43

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 9*

## Old Testament Reading: Song of Solomon 2:8–3:11

The Bride Adores Her Beloved

<sup>8</sup>The voice of my beloved!

Behold, he comes,

leaping over the mountains,  
bounding over the hills.

<sup>9</sup>My beloved is like a gazelle  
or a young stag.

Behold, there he stands  
behind our wall,

gazing through the windows,  
looking through the lattice.

<sup>10</sup>My beloved speaks and says to me:

“Arise, my love, my beautiful one,  
and come away,

<sup>11</sup>for behold, the winter is past;  
the rain is over and gone.

<sup>12</sup>The flowers appear on the earth,  
the time of singing has come,  
and the voice of the turtledove  
is heard in our land.

<sup>13</sup>The fig tree ripens its figs,  
and the vines are in blossom;  
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my beautiful one,  
and come away.

<sup>14</sup>O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,  
in the crannies of the cliff,

let me see your face,  
let me hear your voice,  
for your voice is sweet,  
and your face is lovely.

<sup>15</sup>Catch the foxes for us,  
the little foxes  
that spoil the vineyards,  
for our vineyards are in blossom.”

<sup>16</sup>My beloved is mine, and I am his;  
he grazes among the lilies.

<sup>17</sup>Until the day breathes  
and the shadows flee,  
turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle  
or a young stag on cleft mountains.

The Bride's Dream

<sup>3:1</sup>On my bed by night  
I sought him whom my soul loves;  
I sought him, but found him not.  
<sup>2</sup>I will rise now and go about the city,  
in the streets and in the squares;  
I will seek him whom my soul loves.  
I sought him, but found him not.

<sup>3</sup>The watchmen found me  
as they went about in the city.

"Have you seen him whom my soul loves?"

<sup>4</sup>Scarcely had I passed them  
when I found him whom my soul loves.  
I held him, and would not let him go  
until I had brought him into my mother's  
house,  
and into the chamber of her who  
conceived me.

<sup>5</sup>I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
by the gazelles or the does of the field,  
that you not stir up or awaken love  
until it pleases.

Solomon Arrives for the Wedding

<sup>6</sup>What is that coming up from the wilderness  
like columns of smoke,  
perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,  
with all the fragrant powders  
of a merchant?

<sup>7</sup>Behold, it is the litter of Solomon!  
Around it are sixty mighty men,  
some of the mighty men of Israel,

<sup>8</sup>all of them wearing swords  
and expert in war,  
each with his sword at his thigh,  
against terror by night.

<sup>9</sup>King Solomon made himself a carriage  
from the wood of Lebanon.

<sup>10</sup>He made its posts of silver,  
its back of gold, its seat of purple;  
its interior was inlaid with love  
by the daughters of Jerusalem.

<sup>11</sup>Go out, O daughters of Zion,  
and look upon King Solomon,  
with the crown with which his mother  
crowned him  
on the day of his wedding,  
on the day of the gladness of his heart.

### New Testament Reading: John 5:19–29

The Authority of the Son

<sup>19</sup>So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. <sup>20</sup>For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. <sup>21</sup>For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. <sup>22</sup>The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup>that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

<sup>25</sup>"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup>For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. <sup>27</sup>And he has given

him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup>Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice <sup>29</sup>and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”

## Writing

Behold what your Lord says to you: “The hour will come,” He says, “and is now here.” “The hour will come,” yes, certainly, that very hour, “when”—when what? “When the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.” Then those who will not hear will not live. What is the meaning of: “those who hear”? It means those who will obey. What is the meaning of: “those who will hear”? It means those who will believe and obey, they will live. So, then, before they believed and obeyed, they lay dead; they walked yet were dead. What benefit was it to those who were dead that they still walked? Yet if one among them were to die a physical death, they would run, get the grave ready, wrap him up, carry him out, bury him—the dead, the dead, of whom it is said: “Let the dead bury their dead.” Dead ones such as these are raised by the Word of God to live in faith. Those who were dead in unbelief are aroused by the Word. Of this hour the Lord said: “The hour will come and is now here.” For with His own Word He raised those who were dead in unbelief, of whom the apostle says: “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you” [Ephesians 5:14]. This is the resurrection of hearts; this is the resurrection of the inner man; this is the resurrection of the soul.

But this is not the only resurrection; there remains also a resurrection of the body. Whoever rises again in soul will rise again in body to his blessedness. For all do not rise again in soul. In soul, I say, all do not rise again, but only those who hear and obey, for “those who hear will live.”

—Augustine

## Hymnody

See how He sends the pow'rs of evil reeling;  
He brings us freedom,  
light and life and healing.  
All men and women, who by guilt are driven,  
Now are forgiven.

—Rise, Shine, You People (*LSB* 825:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to give life to the world. Make us hearers of Your Word that we may share in His divine life, be partakers of all its gifts, and receive the fullness of that life in the heavenly places; through Your Son, Jesus Christ. (1029)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Preface to the Christian Book of Concord 5–7

## 20 MAY

## Psalmody

<sup>105</sup>Your word is a lamp | to my feet\*  
and a light | to my path.

<sup>106</sup>I have sworn an oath and con- | firmed it,\*  
to keep your just and righ- | teous  
decrees.

- <sup>107</sup> I am severely af- | flicted;\*  
give me life, O LORD,  
according | to your word!
- <sup>108</sup> Accept my freewill offerings  
of praise, | O LORD,\*  
and teach me your | just decrees.
- <sup>109</sup> I hold my life in my hand con- | tinually,\*  
but I do not for- | get your law.
- <sup>110</sup> The wicked have laid a | snare for me,\*  
but I do not stray from your | precepts.
- <sup>111</sup> Your testimonies are my heritage  
for- | ever,\*  
for they are the joy | of my heart.
- <sup>112</sup> I incline my heart to perform  
your | statutes\*  
forever, | to the end.  
—Psalm 119:105–112

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 75*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Song of Solomon 4:1–5:1**

Solomon Admires His Bride's Beauty

**Groom**

- <sup>1</sup>Behold, you are beautiful, my love,  
behold, you are beautiful!
- Your eyes are doves  
behind your veil.
- Your hair is like a flock of goats  
leaping down the slopes of Gilead.
- <sup>2</sup>Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes  
that have come up from the washing,  
all of which bear twins,  
and not one among them has lost  
its young.
- <sup>3</sup>Your lips are like a scarlet thread,  
and your mouth is lovely.
- Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate  
behind your veil.

- <sup>4</sup>Your neck is like the tower of David,  
built in rows of stone;  
on it hang a thousand shields,  
all of them shields of warriors.
- <sup>5</sup>Your two breasts are like two fawns,  
twins of a gazelle,  
that graze among the lilies.
- <sup>6</sup>Until the day breathes  
and the shadows flee,  
I will go away to the mountain of myrrh  
and the hill of frankincense.
- <sup>7</sup>You are altogether beautiful, my love;  
there is no flaw in you.
- <sup>8</sup>Come with me from Lebanon, my bride;  
come with me from Lebanon.  
Depart from the peak of Amana,  
from the peak of Senir and Hermon,  
from the dens of lions,  
from the mountains of leopards.
- <sup>9</sup>You have captivated my heart, my sister,  
my bride;  
you have captivated my heart with one  
glance of your eyes,  
with one jewel of your necklace.
- <sup>10</sup>How beautiful is your love, my sister,  
my bride!  
How much better is your love than wine,  
and the fragrance of your oils than  
any spice!
- <sup>11</sup>Your lips drip nectar, my bride;  
honey and milk are under your tongue;  
the fragrance of your garments is like the  
fragrance of Lebanon.
- <sup>12</sup>A garden locked is my sister, my bride,  
a spring locked, a fountain sealed.
- <sup>13</sup>Your shoots are an orchard  
of pomegranates  
with all choicest fruits,  
henna with nard,
- <sup>14</sup>nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,  
with all trees of frankincense,

myrrh and aloes,  
with all choice spices—  
<sup>15</sup>a garden fountain, a well of living water,  
and flowing streams from Lebanon.  
<sup>16</sup>Awake, O north wind,  
and come, O south wind!  
Blow upon my garden,  
let its spices flow.

Together in the Garden of Love

**Bride**

Let my beloved come to his garden,  
and eat its choicest fruits.

**Groom**

<sup>5:1</sup>I came to my garden, my sister, my bride,  
I gathered my myrrh with my spice,  
I ate my honeycomb with my honey,  
I drank my wine with my milk.

**Chorus of Women**

Eat, friends, drink,  
and be drunk with love!

**New Testament Reading: John 5:30–47**

Witnesses to Jesus

<sup>30</sup>“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>31</sup>If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not deemed true. <sup>32</sup>There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true. <sup>33</sup>You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. <sup>34</sup>Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup>He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. <sup>36</sup>But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish,

the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. <sup>37</sup>And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, <sup>38</sup>and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. <sup>39</sup>You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, <sup>40</sup>yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. <sup>41</sup>I do not receive glory from people. <sup>42</sup>But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. <sup>43</sup>I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. <sup>44</sup>How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? <sup>45</sup>Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. <sup>46</sup>For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. <sup>47</sup>But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

**Writing**

IV.

Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight (Romans 3 and 4 [3:21–26; 4:5]).

V.

So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given [John 20:22]. He works faith, when and where it pleases God [John 3:8], in those who hear the good news that God justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. This happens not through our own merits, but for Christ's sake.

Our churches condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that through their own preparations and works the Holy Spirit comes to them without the external Word.

VI.

Our churches teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruit [Galatians 5:22–23]. It is necessary to do good works commanded by God [Ephesians 2:10], because of God's will. We should not rely on those works to merit justification before God. The forgiveness of sins and justification is received through faith. The voice of Christ testifies, "So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty'" (Luke 17:10). The Fathers teach the same thing. Ambrose says, "It is ordained of God that he who believes in Christ is saved, freely receiving forgiveness of sins, without works, through faith alone."

—Augsburg Confession IV–VI

### Hymnody

"Yes, Father, yes, most willingly  
I'll bear what You command Me.  
My will conforms to Your decree,

I'll do what You have asked Me."

O wondrous Love, what have You done!

The Father offers up His Son,

Desiring our salvation.

O Love, how strong You are to save!

You lay the One into the grave

Who built the earth's foundation.

—A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth  
(LSB 438:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, You sent John the Baptist into the world to bear witness to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Call each of us to repent of trust in anything or anyone but You, so that we might be ready to receive Christ as He comes to us in His body and blood; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1030)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Preface to the Christian Book of Concord 8–11

## 21 MAY

*Emperor Constantine, Christian Ruler,  
and Helena, Mother of Constantine*

### Psalmody

<sup>8</sup> Arise, O LORD, and go to your | resting  
place,\*

you and the ark | of your might.

<sup>9</sup> Let your priests be clothed  
with | righteousness,\*

and let your saints | shout for joy.

- <sup>10</sup> For the sake of your servant | David,\*  
do not turn away the face  
of your a- | nointed one.
- <sup>11</sup> The LORD swore to David a sure oath from  
which he will | not turn back:\*
- “One of the sons of your body I will  
set | on your throne.
- <sup>12</sup> If your sons keep my covenant and my  
testimonies that I shall | teach them,\*  
their sons also forever shall  
sit | on your throne.”
- <sup>13</sup> For the LORD has chosen | Zion;\*  
he has desired it for his | dwelling place:
- <sup>14</sup> “This is my resting place for- | ever;\*  
here I will dwell, for I have de- | sired it.
- <sup>15</sup> I will abundantly bless her pro- | visions;\*  
I will satisfy her | poor with bread.
- <sup>16</sup> Her priests I will clothe with sal- | vation,\*  
and her saints will | shout for joy.
- <sup>17</sup> There I will make a horn  
to sprout for | David;\*
- I have prepared a lamp  
for my a- | nointed.
- <sup>18</sup> His enemies I will | clothe with shame,\*  
but on him his | crown will shine.”
- Psalm 132:8–18

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 81*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Song of Solomon 5:2–6:3**

The Bride Searches for Her Beloved

**Bride**

- <sup>2</sup>I slept, but my heart was awake.  
A sound! My beloved is knocking.  
“Open to me, my sister, my love,  
my dove, my perfect one,  
for my head is wet with dew,  
my locks with the drops of the night.”
- <sup>3</sup>I had put off my garment;  
how could I put it on?

- I had bathed my feet;  
how could I soil them?
- <sup>4</sup>My beloved put his hand to the latch,  
and my heart was thrilled within me.
- <sup>5</sup>I arose to open to my beloved,  
and my hands dripped with myrrh,  
my fingers with liquid myrrh,  
on the handles of the bolt.
- <sup>6</sup>I opened to my beloved,  
but my beloved had turned and gone.  
My soul failed me when he spoke.  
I sought him, but found him not;  
I called him, but he gave no answer.
- <sup>7</sup>The watchmen found me  
as they went about in the city;  
they beat me, they bruised me,  
they took away my veil,  
those watchmen of the walls.
- <sup>8</sup>I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
if you find my beloved,  
that you tell him  
I am sick with love.

**Chorus of Women**

- <sup>9</sup>What is your beloved more  
than another beloved,  
O most beautiful among women?  
What is your beloved more  
than another beloved,  
that you thus adjure us?

The Bride Praises Her Beloved

**Bride**

- <sup>10</sup>My beloved is radiant and ruddy,  
distinguished among ten thousand.
- <sup>11</sup>His head is the finest gold;  
his locks are wavy,  
black as a raven.
- <sup>12</sup>His eyes are like doves  
beside streams of water,  
bathed in milk,  
sitting beside a full pool.

<sup>13</sup>His cheeks are like beds of spices,  
mounds of sweet-smelling herbs.

His lips are lilies,  
dripping liquid myrrh.

<sup>14</sup>His arms are rods of gold,  
set with jewels.

His body is polished ivory,  
bedecked with sapphires.

<sup>15</sup>His legs are alabaster columns,  
set on bases of gold.

His appearance is like Lebanon,  
choice as the cedars.

<sup>16</sup>His mouth is most sweet,  
and he is altogether desirable.

This is my beloved and this is my friend,  
O daughters of Jerusalem.

#### **Chorus of Women**

<sup>6:1</sup>Where has your beloved gone,  
O most beautiful among women?

Where has your beloved turned,  
that we may seek him with you?

Together in the Garden of Love

#### **Bride**

<sup>2</sup>My beloved has gone down to his garden  
to the beds of spices,

to graze in the gardens  
and to gather lilies.

<sup>3</sup>I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine;  
he grazes among the lilies.

#### **New Testament Reading: John 6:1–21**

<sup>1</sup>After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup>And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. <sup>3</sup>Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup>Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. <sup>5</sup>Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming

toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" <sup>6</sup>He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." <sup>8</sup>One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup>"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number.

<sup>11</sup>Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup>And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." <sup>13</sup>So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. <sup>14</sup>When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"

<sup>15</sup>Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

#### **Jesus Walks on Water**

<sup>16</sup>When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup>got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. <sup>18</sup>The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup>When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. <sup>20</sup>But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." <sup>21</sup>Then

they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

### Writing

Christ no more lets Himself be seized and made a king by people today than He did at the time of the incident described in our text.

The manner of entering into the kingdom of Christ is entirely different from that of entering into a kingdom of this world. A person enters into an earthly kingdom by coming to the place where the kingdom is situated. He is then recognized as a citizen of that kingdom when he swears the oath of citizenship, pays homage to the king, obeys the laws of the land, pays his tax, and perhaps, when necessary, joins the military and fights for the defense of the kingdom. The king and his officials do not inquire about the state of the heart of the person who does all of this.

It is completely different in the case of Christ's kingdom. This is an invisible, spiritual, heavenly kingdom, a kingdom of hearts and souls. It is everywhere. Therefore, a person can be everywhere in this kingdom and yet remain outside it. Wherever a person may find himself, he can enter into the kingdom of Christ. But wherever that person may go, he never passes through into this kingdom or comes closer to it. One does not enter into this kingdom by any outward means, but only by receiving a new heart. Everything external either does not belong in this kingdom or is only a means that should work the change of the heart by which a person is incorporated into this kingdom.

Moreover, a person does not come into this kingdom by any work. He may work

earnestly for this kingdom, offer many gifts for it, fight for it, suffer and endure much for it, and even let himself be burned for it. But if he does not have that new, changed heart, he would be a tool, a worker, and a mercenary rather than a member, a subject, and a citizen of this kingdom. Wherever there are hearts in which the rule of sin has been replaced by the rule of Christ, in which He has truly placed His throne, and in which He directs and governs by His Spirit, there—and only there—is Christ's kingdom.

Therefore, the one who has not experienced this changed heart—or the one who has lost it—is no citizen of the kingdom of Christ. And whoever wants to be exactly like those who, in a foolish way, wanted to seize Christ and make Him their king are engaged in a vain effort.

—C. F. W. Walther

### Hymnody

O bread of heav'n, my soul's delight,  
 For full and free remission  
 I come with prayer before Your sight  
 In sorrow and contrition.  
 Your righteousness, Lord, cover me  
 That I receive You worthily,  
 Assured of Your full pardon.

—Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread  
 (LSB 625:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, through Your servant Constantine, Your Church flourished, and by his mother, Helena, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem became a holy place for many pilgrims. Grant to us this same zeal for Your Church and charity toward Your people, that we may be fruitful in good works

and steadfast in faith. Keep us ever grateful for Your abundant provision, with our eyes fixed, as Helena's were, on the highest and greatest treasure of all, the cross of Christ; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1031)

### Emperor Constantine, Christian Ruler, and Helena, Mother of Constantine

Constantine I served as Roman emperor from AD 306 to 337. During his reign, the persecution of Christians was forbidden by the Edict of Milan in AD 313, and, ultimately, the faith gained full imperial support. Constantine took an active interest in the life and teachings of the Church and called the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, at which orthodox Christianity was defined and defended. His mother, Helena (ca. AD 255–329), strongly influenced Constantine. Her great interest in locating the holy sites of the Christian faith led her to become one of the first Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. Her research led to the identification of biblical locations in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and beyond, which are still maintained as places of worship today.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Preface to the Christian Book of Concord  
12–14

## 22 MAY

### Psalmody

- <sup>16</sup> Better is the little that the | righteous has\*  
than the abundance of many | wicked.
- <sup>17</sup> For the arms of the wicked  
shall be | broken,\*  
but the LORD upholds the | righteous.
- <sup>18</sup> The LORD knows the days  
of the | blameless,\*  
and their heritage will remain for- | ever;
- <sup>19</sup> they are not put to shame in | evil times;\*  
in the days of famine they  
have a- | bundance.
- <sup>20</sup> But the wicked will perish; the enemies of  
the LORD are like the glory  
of the | pastures;\*  
they vanish—like smoke  
they van- | ish away.
- <sup>21</sup> The wicked borrows but  
does | not pay back,\*  
but the righteous is  
gener- | ous and gives;
- <sup>22</sup> for those blessed by the LORD  
shall inher- | it the land,\*  
but those cursed by him shall | be cut off.
- <sup>23</sup> The steps of a man are established | by  
the LORD,\*  
when he delights | in his way;
- <sup>24</sup> though he fall, he shall not  
be cast | headlong,\*  
for the LORD up- | holds his hand.
- <sup>25</sup> I have been young, and | now am old,\*  
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken  
or his children beg- | ging for bread.
- <sup>26</sup> He is ever lending | generously,\*  
and his children become a | blessing.  
—Psalm 37:16–26

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 78*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Song of Solomon 6:4–7:5**

Solomon and His Bride Delight in Each Other

**Groom**

<sup>4</sup>You are beautiful as Tirzah, my love,  
lovely as Jerusalem,  
awesome as an army with banners.

<sup>5</sup>Turn away your eyes from me,  
for they overwhelm me—

Your hair is like a flock of goats  
leaping down the slopes of Gilead.

<sup>6</sup>Your teeth are like a flock of ewes  
that have come up from the washing;  
all of them bear twins;  
not one among them has lost its young.

<sup>7</sup>Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate  
behind your veil.

<sup>8</sup>There are sixty queens and eighty  
concubines,  
and virgins without number.

<sup>9</sup>My dove, my perfect one, is the only one,  
the only one of her mother,  
pure to her who bore her.

The young women saw her and called  
her blessed;  
the queens and concubines also,  
and they praised her.

<sup>10</sup>“Who is this who looks down like  
the dawn,  
beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun,  
awesome as an army with banners?”

**Bride**

<sup>11</sup>I went down to the nut orchard  
to look at the blossoms of the valley,  
to see whether the vines had budded,  
whether the pomegranates  
were in bloom.

<sup>12</sup>Before I was aware, my desire set me  
among the chariots of my kinsman,  
a prince.

**Chorus of Women**

<sup>13</sup>Return, return, O Shulammitte,  
return, return, that we may look upon  
you.

**Groom**

Why should you look upon the Shulammitte,  
as upon a dance before two armies?

<sup>7:1</sup>How beautiful are your feet in sandals,  
O noble daughter!

Your rounded thighs are like jewels,  
the work of a master hand.

<sup>2</sup>Your navel is a rounded bowl  
that never lacks mixed wine.

Your belly is a heap of wheat,  
encircled with lilies.

<sup>3</sup>Your two breasts are like two fawns,  
twins of a gazelle.

<sup>4</sup>Your neck is like an ivory tower.  
Your eyes are pools in Heshbon,  
by the gate of Bath-rabbim.

Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon,  
which looks toward Damascus.

<sup>5</sup>Your head crowns you like Carmel,  
and your flowing locks are like purple;  
a king is held captive in the tresses.

**New Testament Reading: John 6:22–40**

I Am the Bread of Life

<sup>22</sup>On the next day the crowd that  
remained on the other side of the sea saw  
that there had been only one boat there, and  
that Jesus had not entered the boat with his  
disciples, but that his disciples had gone away  
alone. <sup>23</sup>Other boats from Tiberias came near  
the place where they had eaten the bread  
after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>24</sup>So when  
the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor  
his disciples, they themselves got into the  
boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

<sup>25</sup>When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” <sup>26</sup>Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. <sup>27</sup>Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” <sup>28</sup>Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” <sup>30</sup>So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?” <sup>31</sup>Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” <sup>32</sup>Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” <sup>34</sup>They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

<sup>35</sup>Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup>But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup>All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup>For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup>And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup>For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

## Writing

And now since He is believed as one Person, God and man, it is also proper for us to speak of Him as each nature requires. Some words reflect His human, others His divine nature. Therefore we should consider what Christ says according to His human nature and what He says according to His divine nature. For where this is not observed and properly distinguished, many types of heresy must result, as happened in times gone by, when some people asserted that Christ was not true God and others that He was not true man. They were unable to follow the principle of differentiating between the two types of discourse on the basis of the two natures.

Christ often spoke as the lowliest man on earth should hardly speak. For example, when He says: “I have not come to be served, but to serve” (Matt. 20:28). With these words He really makes Himself a servant among all men, although He is true God and Lord over all creatures, whom all must serve and worship. And in Ps. 41:4 He makes Himself a sinner and says that He is being punished because of sin. This, of course, is out of the question according to the divine nature. And again, He employs the speech of exalted majesty, such as no angel or creature should use, even though He was in the lowliest form and figure of His sojourn on earth. We read, for instance, in John 6:62: “Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending where He was before?”

Yes, all that Scripture says of Christ covers the whole Person, just as though both God and man were one essence.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

My Lord, You here have led me  
 To this most holy place,  
 And with Yourself have fed me  
 The treasures of Your grace;  
 For You have freely given  
 What earth could never buy,  
 The bread of life from heaven,  
 That now I shall not die.

—O Living Bread from Heaven  
 (LSB 642:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful Father, You gave Your Son  
 Jesus as the heavenly bread of life. Grant  
 us faith to feast on Him in Your Word and  
 Sacraments that we may be nourished unto  
 life everlasting; through the same Jesus  
 Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with  
 You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
 forever. (B71)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Preface to the Christian Book of Concord 16

23 MAY

## Psalmody

<sup>12</sup>What man is there who de- | sires life\*  
 and loves many days,  
 that he may | see good?

<sup>13</sup>Keep your tongue from | evil\*  
 and your lips from speak- | ing deceit.

<sup>14</sup>Turn away from evil | and do good;\*  
 seek peace and pur- | sue it.

<sup>15</sup>The eyes of the LORD are toward  
 the | righteous\*  
 and his ears | toward their cry.

<sup>16</sup>The face of the LORD is against those  
 who do | evil,\*  
 to cut off the memory of them | from  
 the earth.

<sup>17</sup>When the righteous cry for help,  
 the | LORD hears\*  
 and delivers them out of all  
 their | troubles.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD is near to the broken- | hearted\*  
 and saves the crushed in | spirit.

<sup>19</sup>Many are the afflictions of the | righteous,\*  
 but the LORD delivers him  
 out | of them all.

<sup>20</sup>He keeps | all his bones,\*  
 not one of them is | broken.

<sup>21</sup>Affliction will slay the | wicked,\*  
 and those who hate the righteous  
 will | be condemned.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD redeems the life  
 of his | servants;\*  
 none of those who take refuge in him  
 will | be condemned.

—Psalm 34:12–22

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 34*

## Old Testament Reading: Song of Solomon 7:6–8:14

<sup>6</sup>How beautiful and pleasant you are,  
 O loved one, with all your delights!

<sup>7</sup>Your stature is like a palm tree,  
 and your breasts are like its clusters.

<sup>8</sup>I say I will climb the palm tree  
 and lay hold of its fruit.

Oh may your breasts be like clusters  
 of the vine,  
 and the scent of your breath like apples,

<sup>9</sup>and your mouth like the best wine.

### Bride

It goes down smoothly for my beloved,  
 gliding over lips and teeth.

<sup>10</sup>I am my beloved's,  
and his desire is for me.

The Bride Gives Her Love

<sup>11</sup>Come, my beloved,  
let us go out into the fields  
and lodge in the villages;

<sup>12</sup>let us go out early to the vineyards  
and see whether the vines have budded,  
whether the grape blossoms have opened  
and the pomegranates are in bloom.

There I will give you my love.

<sup>13</sup>The mandrakes give forth fragrance,  
and beside our doors are all choice fruits,  
new as well as old,  
which I have laid up for you, O my  
beloved.

<sup>8:1</sup>Oh that you were like a brother to me  
who nursed at my mother's breasts!  
If I found you outside, I would kiss you,  
and none would despise me.

<sup>2</sup>I would lead you and bring you  
into the house of my mother—  
she who used to teach me.

I would give you spiced wine to drink,  
the juice of my pomegranate.

<sup>3</sup>His left hand is under my head,  
and his right hand embraces me!

<sup>4</sup>I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
that you not stir up or awaken love  
until it pleases.

<sup>5</sup>Who is that coming up from the wilderness,  
leaning on her beloved?  
Under the apple tree I awakened you.  
There your mother was in labor with you;  
there she who bore you was in labor.

<sup>6</sup>Set me as a seal upon your heart,  
as a seal upon your arm,  
for love is strong as death,  
jealousy is fierce as the grave.

Its flashes are flashes of fire,  
the very flame of the Lord.

<sup>7</sup>Many waters cannot quench love,  
neither can floods drown it.

If a man offered for love  
all the wealth of his house,  
he would be utterly despised.

Final Advice

**Chorus of Women**

<sup>8</sup>We have a little sister,  
and she has no breasts.

What shall we do for our sister  
on the day when she is spoken for?

<sup>9</sup>If she is a wall,  
we will build on her a battlement  
of silver,

but if she is a door,  
we will enclose her with boards of cedar.

**Bride**

<sup>10</sup>I was a wall,  
and my breasts were like towers;  
then I was in his eyes  
as one who finds peace.

<sup>11</sup>Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon;  
he let out the vineyard to keepers;  
each one was to bring for its fruit a  
thousand pieces of silver.

<sup>12</sup>My vineyard, my very own, is before me;  
you, O Solomon, may have the thousand,  
and the keepers of the fruit two hundred.

**Groom**

<sup>13</sup>O you who dwell in the gardens,  
with companions listening  
for your voice;  
let me hear it.

**Bride**

<sup>14</sup>Make haste, my beloved,  
and be like a gazelle  
or a young stag  
on the mountains of spices.

**New Testament Reading: John 6:41–59**

<sup>41</sup>So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” <sup>42</sup>They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” <sup>43</sup>Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup>No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup>It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—<sup>46</sup>not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup>I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup>I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

<sup>52</sup>The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” <sup>53</sup>So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup>Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup>For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup>Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup>As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. <sup>58</sup>This is the bread that came down from

heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” <sup>59</sup>Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

**Writing**

Thus the Lord declared above: “He who believes in Me has eternal life” and: “I am the bread of life.” These words greatly offended the Jews. It annoyed them to think that this Man should have the power to save, to bestow eternal life, and also to deliver us from death, sin, and all evil.

After all, He did not give that appearance. He was a poor man, the son of a poor carpenter and of a poor mother, devoid of all power. Therefore, it sounded unreasonable to hear Him say: “He who believes in Me will have eternal life.” But I have told you that whoever would remain a Christian and be saved must not follow his eyes or judge by appearances, confer with reason, or employ his other senses in this matter; he must hear solely what is preached to him and must turn his ear to the lips of this Man. Whoever fails to do this, but surrenders and forsakes God’s Word, is lost.

Christ swears an oath attesting this: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has eternal life. This is the only way to eternal life and the only redemption from sin, death, and devil, namely, your faith in Me; for I am the Way and the Life (John 14:6). If you can obtain this bread and permit Me to feed you, that is, if you believe in Me, then you are healthy. Then sin, death, and hell cannot harm you, and you are rid of all your enemies.”

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

What higher gift can we inherit?  
 It is faith's bond and solid base;  
 It is the strength of heart and spirit,  
 The covenant of hope and grace.  
 Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood  
 Be for my soul the highest good!  
 —I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table  
 (LSB 618:5)

## Prayer of the Day

Gracious Father, Your blessed Son came down from heaven to be the true bread that gives life to the world. Grant that Christ, the bread of life, may live in us and we in Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B72)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Preface to the Christian Book of Concord  
 17–19

**24 MAY**

*Esther*

Propers for May 24–June 25 for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.

## Psalmody

<sup>4</sup>“O LORD, make me know my end and what is the measure | of my days;\*  
 let me know how fleeting | I am!  
<sup>5</sup>Behold, you have made my days  
 a few | handbreadths,\*  
 and my lifetime is as nothing  
 be- | fore you.

Surely all mankind stands as a | mere breath!\*

<sup>6</sup> Surely a man goes about as a | shadow!

Surely for nothing they are in | turmoil,\*  
 man heaps up wealth and does not  
 know who will | gather!

<sup>7</sup>“And now, O Lord, for what | do I wait?\*

My hope | is in you.

<sup>8</sup>Deliver me from all my trans- | gressions.\*  
 Do not make me the scorn | of the fool!

<sup>9</sup>I am mute; I do not open | my mouth,\*  
 for it is you who have | done it.

<sup>10</sup>Remove your | stroke from me;\*  
 I am spent by the hostility | of your hand.

<sup>11</sup>When you discipline a man with rebukes  
 for sin, you consume like a moth  
 what is | dear to him;\*  
 surely all mankind is a | mere breath!

—Psalm 39:4–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 39*

## Old Testament Reading: Ecclesiastes 1:1–18

All Is Vanity

<sup>1</sup>The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher,  
 vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

<sup>3</sup>What does man gain by all the toil  
 at which he toils under the sun?

<sup>4</sup>A generation goes, and  
 a generation comes,  
 but the earth remains forever.

<sup>5</sup>The sun rises, and the sun goes down,  
 and hastens to the place where it  
 rises.

<sup>6</sup>The wind blows to the south  
 and goes around to the north;  
 around and around goes the wind,  
 and on its circuits the wind returns.

<sup>7</sup>All streams run to the sea,  
but the sea is not full;  
to the place where the streams flow,  
there they flow again.

<sup>8</sup>All things are full of weariness;  
a man cannot utter it;  
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,  
nor the ear filled with hearing.

<sup>9</sup>What has been is what will be,  
and what has been done  
is what will be done,  
and there is nothing new  
under the sun.

<sup>10</sup>Is there a thing of which it is said,  
“See, this is new”?

It has been already  
in the ages before us.

<sup>11</sup>There is no remembrance  
of former things,  
nor will there be any remembrance  
of later things yet to be  
among those who come after.

#### The Vanity of Wisdom

<sup>12</sup>I the Preacher have been king over  
Israel in Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>And I applied my heart  
to seek and to search out by wisdom all  
that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy  
business that God has given to the children  
of man to be busy with. <sup>14</sup>I have seen  
everything that is done under the sun, and  
behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

<sup>15</sup>What is crooked cannot  
be made straight,  
and what is lacking cannot  
be counted.

<sup>16</sup>I said in my heart, “I have acquired  
great wisdom, surpassing all who were over  
Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had  
great experience of wisdom and knowledge.”

<sup>17</sup>And I applied my heart to know wisdom

and to know madness and folly. I perceived  
that this also is but a striving after wind.

<sup>18</sup>For in much wisdom is much vexation,  
and he who increases knowledge  
increases sorrow.

*Additional Reading: Esther 1:1–10:3*

#### New Testament Reading: John 6:60–71

##### The Words of Eternal Life

<sup>60</sup>When many of his disciples heard it,  
they said, “This is a hard saying; who can  
listen to it?” <sup>61</sup>But Jesus, knowing in himself  
that his disciples were grumbling about  
this, said to them, “Do you take offense at  
this? <sup>62</sup>Then what if you were to see the Son  
of Man ascending to where he was before?

<sup>63</sup>It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no  
help at all. The words that I have spoken to  
you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup>But there are some  
of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew  
from the beginning who those were who  
did not believe, and who it was who would  
betray him.) <sup>65</sup>And he said, “This is why I told  
you that no one can come to me unless it is  
granted him by the Father.”

<sup>66</sup>After this many of his disciples turned  
back and no longer walked with him. <sup>67</sup>So  
Jesus said to the Twelve, “Do you want to go  
away as well?” <sup>68</sup>Simon Peter answered him,  
“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the  
words of eternal life, <sup>69</sup>and we have believed,  
and have come to know, that you are the  
Holy One of God.” <sup>70</sup>Jesus answered them,  
“Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet  
one of you is a devil.” <sup>71</sup>He spoke of Judas  
the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the  
Twelve, was going to betray him.

## Writing

To wear decent clothes and seek an honest living is a necessity, not a sin. Yet in his heart a child must be reconciled to the fact that it is an awful pity that this miserable earthly life cannot well be lived, or even begun, without the striving after more adornment and more possessions than are necessary to protect the body against cold and for nourishment. Thus the child must be taught to do against its own will what the world wants. The child must put up with fools and with that kind of evil for the sake of something better and to avoid something worse. Queen Esther wore her royal crown, but yet she said to God, “Thou knowest that the sign of my high estate which is upon my head has never at all delighted me, and that I abhor it as a filthy menstruous rag. I never wear it when I am alone, but only when I have to and when I face the people.” The heart that is so minded wears adornment without peril, for it wears and yet does not wear, it dances yet does not dance, it lives well yet does not live well. And souls such as this are the sacred hidden brides of Christ. But such souls are rare, for it is hard not to take delight in great adornment and display.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Sin’s debt, that fearful burden,  
 Cannot His love erase;  
 Your guilt the Lord will pardon  
 And cover by His grace.  
 He comes, for you procuring  
 The peace of sin forgiv’n,  
 His children thus securing  
 Eternal life in heav’n.

—O Lord, How Shall I Meet You  
 (LSB 334:6)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You graced Your servant Queen Esther not only with beauty and elegance but also with faith and wisdom. Grant that we, too, might use the qualities that You have generously bestowed on us for the glory of Your mighty name and for the good of Your people, that through Your work in us, we may be advocates of the oppressed and defenders of the weak, preserving our faith in the great High Priest who intercedes on our behalf, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1032)

## Esther

Esther is the heroine of the biblical book that bears her name. Her Jewish name was Hadassah, which means “myrtle.” Her beauty, charm, and courage served her well as queen to King Ahasuerus. In that role, she was able to save her people from the mass extermination that Haman, the king’s chief advisor, had planned (2:19–4:17). Esther’s efforts to uncover the plot resulted in the hanging of Haman on the very same gallows that he had built for Mordecai, her uncle and guardian. Following this, the king named Mordecai minister of state in Haman’s place. This story is an example of how God intervenes on behalf of His people to deliver them from evil, as here through Esther He preserved the Old Testament people through whom the Messiah would come.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Preface to the Christian Book of Concord 20

## 25 MAY

*Bede the Venerable, Theologian***Psalmody**<sup>1</sup>The LORD says to my Lord:

“Sit at my | right hand,\*  
 until I make your enemies  
 your | footstool.”

<sup>2</sup>The LORD sends forth from Zion  
 your mighty | scepter.\*

Rule in the midst of your | enemies!

<sup>3</sup>Your people will offer themselves freely on  
 the day of your power, in holy | garments;\*  
 from the womb of the morning, the dew  
 of your youth | will be yours.<sup>4</sup>The LORD has sworn and  
 will not | change his mind,\*

“You are a priest forever after the order  
 of Mel- | chizedek.”

<sup>5</sup>The Lord is at your | right hand;\*  
 he will shatter kings on the day | of his  
 wrath.<sup>6</sup>He will execute judgment among the  
 nations, filling them with | corpses;\*  
 he will shatter chiefs over  
 the | wide earth.<sup>7</sup>He will drink from the brook | by the way;\*  
 therefore he will lift | up his head.

—Psalm 110

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 49***Old Testament Reading:  
Ecclesiastes 2:1–26**

The Vanity of Self-Indulgence

<sup>1</sup>I said in my heart, “Come now, I will  
 test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself.”  
 But behold, this also was vanity. <sup>2</sup>I said of  
 laughter, “It is mad,” and of pleasure, “What  
 use is it?” <sup>3</sup>I searched with my heart how to

cheer my body with wine—my heart still  
 guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay  
 hold on folly, till I might see what was good  
 for the children of man to do under heaven  
 during the few days of their life. <sup>4</sup>I made  
 great works. I built houses and planted  
 vineyards for myself. <sup>5</sup>I made myself gardens  
 and parks, and planted in them all kinds of  
 fruit trees. <sup>6</sup>I made myself pools from which  
 to water the forest of growing trees. <sup>7</sup>I bought  
 male and female slaves, and had slaves who  
 were born in my house. I had also great  
 possessions of herds and flocks, more than  
 any who had been before me in Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup>I  
 also gathered for myself silver and gold and  
 the treasure of kings and provinces. I got  
 singers, both men and women, and many  
 concubines, the delight of the children of  
 man.

<sup>9</sup>So I became great and surpassed all  
 who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my  
 wisdom remained with me. <sup>10</sup>And whatever  
 my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I  
 kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart  
 found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my  
 reward for all my toil. <sup>11</sup>Then I considered all  
 that my hands had done and the toil I had  
 expended in doing it, and behold, all was  
 vanity and a striving after wind, and there  
 was nothing to be gained under the sun.

The Vanity of Living Wisely

<sup>12</sup>So I turned to consider wisdom and  
 madness and folly. For what can the man do  
 who comes after the king? Only what has  
 already been done. <sup>13</sup>Then I saw that there is  
 more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there  
 is more gain in light than in darkness. <sup>14</sup>The  
 wise person has his eyes in his head, but the  
 fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived  
 that the same event happens to all of them.  
<sup>15</sup>Then I said in my heart, “What happens

to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?" And I said in my heart that this also is vanity. <sup>16</sup>For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool! <sup>17</sup>So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

#### The Vanity of Toil

<sup>18</sup>I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, <sup>19</sup>and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. <sup>20</sup>So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, <sup>21</sup>because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. <sup>22</sup>What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? <sup>23</sup>For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

<sup>24</sup>There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, <sup>25</sup>for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? <sup>26</sup>For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

## New Testament Reading: John 7:1–13

Jesus at the Feast of Booths

<sup>1</sup>After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. <sup>2</sup>Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. <sup>3</sup>So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing." <sup>4</sup>For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup>For not even his brothers believed in him. <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. <sup>7</sup>The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. <sup>8</sup>You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup>After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

<sup>10</sup>But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. <sup>11</sup>The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" <sup>12</sup>And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." <sup>13</sup>Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.

## Writing

It cannot be denied that the monks have taught that they were justified and merited forgiveness of sins by means of their vows and observances. Indeed, they even invented greater absurdities, saying that they could give others a share in their works. . . . And on top of all this, the monks persuaded people that the services that they invented were a state of Christian perfection. What else is this other than assigning our justification to

works? It is no light offense in the Church to set before the people a service invented by people, without God’s commandment, and then to teach them that such service justifies. For the righteousness of faith, which ought to be the highest teaching in the Church, is hidden when these “wonderful” and “angelic” forms of worship, with their show of poverty, humility, and celibacy, are put in front of people.

God’s precepts, and God’s true service, are hidden when people hear that only monks are in a state of perfection. True Christian perfection is to fear God from the heart, to have great faith, and to trust that for Christ’s sake we have a God who has been reconciled [2 Corinthians 5:18–19]. It means to ask for and expect from God His help in all things with confident assurance that we are to live according to our calling in life, being diligent in outward good works, serving in our calling. This is where true perfection and true service of God is to be found. . . .

There are on record examples of men who hid themselves in monasteries because they wanted to forsake marriage and participation in society. They called this fleeing from the world, and said they were seeking a kind of life that would be more pleasing to God. They did not realize that God ought to be served according to the commandments that He Himself has given, not in commandments made up by people. Only a life that has God’s commandment is good and perfect. It is necessary to teach the people about these things.

—Augsburg Confession XXVII 44–50, 56–59

## Hymnody

Now hell, its prince, the devil,  
Of all their pow’r are shorn;  
Now I am safe from evil,  
And sin I laugh to scorn.  
Grim death with all its might  
Cannot my soul affright;  
It is a pow’rless form,  
Howe’er it rave and storm.

—Awake, My Heart, with Gladness  
(LSB 467:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, when he was still a child You called Your servant Bede to devote his life to serve You in the venerable disciplines of religion and scholarship. As he labored in the Spirit to bring the riches of Your truth to his generation, grant that we may also strive to make You known in all the world in our various vocations; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. (1033)

## Bede the Venerable, Theologian

Bede (AD 673–735) was the last of the Early Church fathers and the first to compile the history of the English church. Born in Northumbria, Bede’s parents placed him in a monastery in northern England at the age of seven. He rarely left the monastery and devoted the rest of his life to teaching and writing. The most learned man of his time, he was a prolific writer of history, whose careful use of sources provided a model for historians in the Middle Ages. Known best for his book *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, he was also a profound interpreter of Scripture; his commentaries

are still fresh today. His most famous disciple, Cuthbert, reported that Bede was working on a translation of John's Gospel into English when death came and that he died with the words of the Gloria Patri on his lips. He received the title "Venerable" within two generations of his death and is buried in Durham Cathedral as one of England's greatest saints.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Preface to the Christian Book of Concord  
21–22

## 26 MAY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>Be gracious to me, O God, for man  
tramples | on me;\*  
all day long an attacker op- | presses me;  
<sup>2</sup>my enemies trample on me | all day long,\*  
for many attack me | proudly.  
<sup>3</sup>When I | am afraid,\*  
I put my | trust in you.  
<sup>4</sup>In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust;  
I shall not | be afraid.\*  
What can flesh | do to me?  
—Psalm 56:1–4

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 7*

### Old Testament Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1–22

A Time for Everything

<sup>1</sup>For everything there is a season, and a  
time for every matter under heaven:

- <sup>2</sup>a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up  
what is planted;

- <sup>3</sup>a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time  
to build up;  
<sup>4</sup>a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
<sup>5</sup>a time to cast away stones, and a time to  
gather stones together;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain  
from embracing;  
<sup>6</sup>a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;  
<sup>7</sup>a time to tear, and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to  
speak;  
<sup>8</sup>a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace.

The God-Given Task

<sup>9</sup>What gain has the worker from his toil?  
<sup>10</sup>I have seen the business that God has given  
to the children of man to be busy with. <sup>11</sup>He  
has made everything beautiful in its time.  
Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet  
so that he cannot find out what God has done  
from the beginning to the end. <sup>12</sup>I perceived  
that there is nothing better for them than to  
be joyful and to do good as long as they live;  
<sup>13</sup>also that everyone should eat and drink and  
take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift  
to man.

<sup>14</sup>I perceived that whatever God does  
endures forever; nothing can be added to it,  
nor anything taken from it. God has done it,  
so that people fear before him. <sup>15</sup>That which  
is, already has been; that which is to be,  
already has been; and God seeks what has  
been driven away.

From Dust to Dust

<sup>16</sup>Moreover, I saw under the sun  
that in the place of justice, even there  
was wickedness, and in the place of

righteousness, even there was wickedness.

<sup>17</sup>I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work. <sup>18</sup>I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. <sup>19</sup>For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. <sup>20</sup>All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. <sup>21</sup>Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth? <sup>22</sup>So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?

### New Testament Reading: John 7:14–31

<sup>14</sup>About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. <sup>15</sup>The Jews therefore marveled, saying, “How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?” <sup>16</sup>So Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. <sup>17</sup>If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. <sup>18</sup>The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. <sup>19</sup>Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?” <sup>20</sup>The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?” <sup>21</sup>Jesus answered them, “I did one work, and you all marvel at

it. <sup>22</sup>Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup>If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man’s whole body well? <sup>24</sup>Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

Can This Be the Christ?

<sup>25</sup>Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, “Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? <sup>26</sup>And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? <sup>27</sup>But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.” <sup>28</sup>So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. <sup>29</sup>I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.” <sup>30</sup>So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. <sup>31</sup>Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”

### Writing

Many sources in Scripture tell us that we should do no work on the sabbath. We are to rest as it were and quit doing all those tasks that invite sweat and labor. For he says in Exodus, “Six years you shall sow your land and gather in the fruit, but in the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie still” [Ex 23:10–11. See also Lev 25:2–4]. Now, it is not the land—which does not even know what

work is—that he releases; nor is it to the land that he gives this law. It was given to those who possessed the land. He gave rest to the land so that they would not work on it. In this and many other ways he pointed toward our feast with Christ, a feast in which those who have lived in divine fear will hurry toward that perfect and complete liberty that is in holiness and will run to that most wealthy grace of the Spirit. This is clear in the commands themselves of Moses. It is written, “If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you” [Deut 15:12]. We, who were originally slaves to sin, had, after a fashion, sold ourselves to the devil by taking pleasure in evil. But now, being justified in Christ through faith, we shall mount up to the true and holy keeping of the sabbath, clothed with the liberty that comes through grace and glorified with the good things of God.

—Cyril of Alexandria

### Hymnody

Eternal Lord, Your wisdom sees  
And fathoms all life’s tragedies;  
You know our grief, You hear our sighs—  
In mercy, dry our tear-stained eyes.  
From evil times, You bring great good;  
Beneath the cross, we’ve safely stood.  
Though dimly now life’s path we trace,  
One day we shall see face to face.

—There Is a Time for Everything  
(LSB 762:3)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L50)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Preface to the Christian Book of Concord 23–25

## 27 MAY

### Psalmody

- <sup>4</sup> One thing have I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek | after;\*  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life, to gaze upon  
the beauty of the LORD and to inquire  
in his | temple.
- <sup>5</sup> For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of | trouble;\*  
he will conceal me under the cover of his  
tent; he will lift me high up- | on a rock.
- <sup>6</sup> And now my head shall be lifted up above  
my enemies all around me, and I will offer  
in his tent sacrifices with | shouts of joy;\*  
I will sing and make melody | to  
the LORD.
- <sup>7</sup> Hear, O LORD, when I | cry aloud;\*  
be gracious to me and | answer me!
- <sup>8</sup> You have said, | “Seek my face.”\*  
My heart says to you, “Your face,  
LORD, | do I seek.”

<sup>9</sup>Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in | anger,\*

O you who have been my help.  
Cast me not off; forsake me not,  
O God of my sal- | vation!

<sup>10</sup>For my father and my mother have for- | saken me,\*

but the LORD will | take me in.  
—Psalm 27:4–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 83*

### Old Testament Reading: Ecclesiastes 4:1–16

Evil Under the Sun

<sup>1</sup>Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them. <sup>2</sup>And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. <sup>3</sup>But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

<sup>4</sup>Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

<sup>5</sup>The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh.

<sup>6</sup>Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

<sup>7</sup>Again, I saw vanity under the sun:

<sup>8</sup>one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

<sup>9</sup>Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. <sup>10</sup>For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! <sup>11</sup>Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? <sup>12</sup>And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

<sup>13</sup>Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice. <sup>14</sup>For he went from prison to the throne, though in his own kingdom he had been born poor. <sup>15</sup>I saw all the living who move about under the sun, along with that youth who was to stand in the king's place. <sup>16</sup>There was no end of all the people, all of whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

### New Testament Reading: John 7:32–53

Officers Sent to Arrest Jesus

<sup>32</sup>The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. <sup>33</sup>Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. <sup>34</sup>You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come." <sup>35</sup>The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? <sup>36</sup>What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come?'"

## Rivers of Living Water

<sup>37</sup>On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

<sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” <sup>39</sup>Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

## Division Among the People

<sup>40</sup>When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.”

<sup>41</sup>Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee?”

<sup>42</sup>Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” <sup>43</sup>So there was a division among the people over him. <sup>44</sup>Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

<sup>45</sup>The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?” <sup>46</sup>The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!” <sup>47</sup>The Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived? <sup>48</sup>Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? <sup>49</sup>But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.” <sup>50</sup>Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, <sup>51</sup>“Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?” <sup>52</sup>They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”

<sup>53</sup>They went each to his own house.

## Writing

For this reason, therefore, the Law is not against the promises of God: first, because the promise does not depend on the Law but on the truth of God; secondly, because in its highest and greatest use the Law humbles and by humbling makes men groan, sigh, and seek the hand of the Mediator. It makes His grace and mercy very sweet—as Ps. 109:21 says, “Thy mercy is sweet”—and His gift precious beyond the telling. Thus it makes us ready for Christ. He who has never tasted the bitter will not remember the sweet; hunger is the best cook. As the dry earth thirsts for rain, so the Law makes the troubled heart thirst for Christ. To such hearts Christ tastes sweetest; to them He is joy, comfort, and life. Only then are Christ and His work understood correctly.

Therefore the best use of the Law is to be able to employ it to the point that it produces humility and a thirst for Christ. He Himself requires thirsting souls and attracts them in a most charming manner to Himself when He says (Matt. 11:28): “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Therefore He gladly soaks and irrigates this dry ground. He does not pour out His waters on ground that is fertile or fat or free of thirst. His blessings are inestimable. Therefore He grants them only to the needy; He preaches good news to the poor (Luke 4:18) and gives water to the thirsty. “If anyone thirsts,” He says in John 7:37, “let him come to Me.” “He heals the brokenhearted” (Ps. 147:3). That is, He comforts and saves those who have been vexed and troubled by the Law. Accordingly, the Law is not against the promises of God.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

See, the streams of living waters,  
 Springing from eternal love,  
 Well supply your sons and daughters  
 And all fear of want remove.  
 Who can faint while such a river  
 Ever will their thirst assuage?  
 Grace, which like the Lord, the giver,  
 Never fails from age to age.  
 —Glorious Things of You Are Spoken  
 (LSB 648:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L50)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope 1–12

28 MAY

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>Blessèd is the one whose transgression is for- | given,\*  
 whose sin is | covered.  
<sup>2</sup>Blessèd is the man against whom the Lord counts no in- | iquity,\*  
 and in whose spirit there is | no deceit.

<sup>3</sup>For when I kept silent, my bones  
 wast- | ed away\*  
 through my groaning | all day long.

<sup>4</sup>For day and night your hand  
 was heavy up- | on me;\*  
 my strength was dried up as  
 by the heat of | summer.

<sup>5</sup>I acknowledged my sin to you,  
 and I did not cover my in- | iquity;\*  
 I said, “I will confess my transgressions  
 to the LORD,” and you forgave the  
 iniquity | of my sin.  
 —Psalm 32:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 32*

## Old Testament Reading: Ecclesiastes 5:1–20

Fear God

<sup>1</sup>Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. <sup>2</sup>Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few. <sup>3</sup>For a dream comes with much business, and a fool’s voice with many words.

<sup>4</sup>When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. <sup>5</sup>It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. <sup>6</sup>Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands? <sup>7</sup>For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear.

## The Vanity of Wealth and Honor

<sup>8</sup>If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter, for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them. <sup>9</sup>But this is gain for a land in every way: a king committed to cultivated fields.

<sup>10</sup>He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. <sup>11</sup>When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? <sup>12</sup>Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

<sup>13</sup>There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, <sup>14</sup>and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. <sup>15</sup>As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. <sup>16</sup>This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? <sup>17</sup>Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.

<sup>18</sup>Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. <sup>19</sup>Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. <sup>20</sup>For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

**New Testament Reading: John 8:1–20**

## The Woman Caught in Adultery

<sup>1</sup>Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

<sup>2</sup>Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. <sup>3</sup>The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst <sup>4</sup>they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup>Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” <sup>6</sup>This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup>And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”

<sup>8</sup>And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup>But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup>Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” <sup>11</sup>She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

## I Am the Light of the World

<sup>12</sup>Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” <sup>13</sup>So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.” <sup>14</sup>Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am

going. <sup>15</sup>You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup>Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. <sup>17</sup>In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. <sup>18</sup>I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.” <sup>19</sup>They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” <sup>20</sup>These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

### Writing

The universal realm of Christ may be divided into a threefold kingdom. . . . In the Kingdom of Power, Christ rules [all] by His omnipotence. . . . In the Kingdom of Grace, which embraces the believers . . . He rules in grace through the revealed Word. . . . [T]he Kingdom of Glory extends the Kingdom of Grace into eternity. . . .

Scripture teaches that these realms form a unit inasmuch as they are under one and the same Lord; Christ’s uniform will and purpose directs, and His divine power and majesty controls, all affairs. That is clearly brought out in passages such as Eph. 1:21–23: “Far above all principality . . . and hath put all things under His feet and gave Him . . . to be the Head over all things to the Church.” It is of great practical importance to keep this unity in mind. It is very comforting to know that the sun, moon, and stars, the air, fire and water, the devils and all our enemies obey the will of Christ no less than the Church and the holy angels. It is very comforting to know

that Christ rules the universe in the interest of the Kingdom of Grace, or the Church. In other words: everything in heaven and earth must serve the purpose of gathering and preserving the Church. The kingdoms of this world are “the scaffolding used in the building of the Church.”

—Francis Pieper

### Hymnody

Shine on the darkened and the cold;  
Recall the wand’ers to Your fold.  
Unite all those who walk apart;  
Confirm the weak and doubting heart,

That they with us may evermore  
Such grace with wond’ring thanks adore  
And endless praise to You be giv’n  
By all Your Church in earth and heav’n.

—O Christ, Our True and Only Light  
(LSB 839:4–5)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us to know Your Son, Jesus, to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow His steps in the way that leads to life eternal; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B73)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope 13–24

## 29 MAY

## Psalmody

- <sup>24</sup> O LORD, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom have you | made them all;\*  
the earth is full of your | creatures.
- <sup>25</sup> Here is the sea, | great and wide,\*  
which teems with creatures innumerable,  
living things both | small and great.
- <sup>26</sup> There | go the ships,\*  
and Leviathan, which you formed  
to | play in it.
- <sup>27</sup> These all | look to you,\*  
to give them their food in due | season.
- <sup>28</sup> When you give it to them,  
they gath- | er it up;\*  
when you open your hand,  
they are filled with | good things.
- <sup>29</sup> When you hide your face,  
they | are dismayed;\*  
when you take away their breath,  
they die and return | to their dust.
- <sup>30</sup> When you send forth your Spirit,  
they are cre- | ated,\*  
and you renew the face | of the ground.
- <sup>31</sup> May the glory of the LORD endure  
for- | ever;\*  
may the LORD rejoice | in his works,  
<sup>32</sup> who looks on the earth and it | trembles,\*  
who touches the mountains | and  
they smoke!
- <sup>33</sup> I will sing to the LORD as long | as I live;\*  
I will sing praise to my God  
while I have | being.
- <sup>34</sup> May my meditation be pleas- | ing to him,\*  
for I rejoice | in the LORD.
- <sup>35</sup> Let sinners be consumed from the earth,  
and let the wicked | be no more!\*
- Bless the LORD, O my soul! | Praise  
the LORD!

—Psalm 104:24–35

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 104*

### Old Testament Reading: Ecclesiastes 6:1–7:10

<sup>1</sup>There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: <sup>2</sup>a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous evil. <sup>3</sup>If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. <sup>4</sup>For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. <sup>5</sup>Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he. <sup>6</sup>Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to the one place?

<sup>7</sup>All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied. <sup>8</sup>For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living? <sup>9</sup>Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

<sup>10</sup>Whatever has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man is, and that he is not able to dispute with one stronger than he. <sup>11</sup>The more words, the more vanity, and what is the advantage to man? <sup>12</sup>For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?

The Contrast of Wisdom and Folly

- <sup>7</sup><sup>1</sup>A good name is better than  
precious ointment,  
and the day of death than  
the day of birth.
- <sup>2</sup>It is better to go to the house  
of mourning  
than to go to the house of feasting,  
for this is the end of all mankind,  
and the living will lay it to heart.
- <sup>3</sup>Sorrow is better than laughter,  
for by sadness of face the heart  
is made glad.
- <sup>4</sup>The heart of the wise is in the house  
of mourning,  
but the heart of fools is in the house  
of mirth.
- <sup>5</sup>It is better for a man to hear the rebuke  
of the wise  
than to hear the song of fools.
- <sup>6</sup>For as the crackling of thorns  
under a pot,  
so is the laughter of the fools;  
this also is vanity.
- <sup>7</sup>Surely oppression drives the wise  
into madness,  
and a bribe corrupts the heart.
- <sup>8</sup>Better is the end of a thing than  
its beginning,  
and the patient in spirit is better than  
the proud in spirit.
- <sup>9</sup>Be not quick in your spirit  
to become angry,  
for anger lodges in the bosom  
of fools.
- <sup>10</sup>Say not, "Why were the former days  
better than these?"  
For it is not from wisdom  
that you ask this.

**New Testament Reading: John 8:21–38**

<sup>21</sup>So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." <sup>22</sup>So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'" <sup>23</sup>He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup>I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." <sup>25</sup>So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup>I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." <sup>27</sup>They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. <sup>28</sup>So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. <sup>29</sup>And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." <sup>30</sup>As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

The Truth Will Set You Free

<sup>31</sup>So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." <sup>33</sup>They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free?'"

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup>The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. <sup>36</sup>So if

the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. <sup>37</sup>I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. <sup>38</sup>I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”

## Writing

The first stage of freedom is to abstain from sins . . . such as murder, adultery, any sexual sins, theft, fraud, sacrilege, and others of that sort. When someone has started getting free from these (and every Christian ought to be so), he begins to raise his head toward freedom. But that is freedom begun, not completed. Why, says someone, is it not completed freedom? Because “I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind; for what I want to do,” he says, “that I do not do. But what I hate, that I do.” “The flesh,” he says, “lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; so that you do not do the things that you want.” There is partial freedom and partial bondage. This freedom is not yet complete, pure, or full because it is not yet eternity. For we are still partially weak and thus only partially free. Whatever our sin was previously, it was wiped out in Baptism. But just because all of our iniquity has been blotted out, does that mean there is no weakness left? If there were no weakness left, then that would mean that we should be living here without sin. Yet who would venture to say such a thing except someone who is proud, who is unworthy of the Deliverer’s mercy, who wants to be deceived, and who is destitute of the truth? So from the fact that some weakness remains, I venture to say that, in whatever measure we serve God, we are free;

in whatever measure we serve the law of sin, we are still in bondage. So, too, the apostle says what we began to say, “I delight in the Law of God after the inward man.” Here it is then. Freedom occurs when we delight in the Law of God, for freedom gives you joy. As long as you do what is right out of fear, you find no delight in God. Find your delight in Him, and you are free.

—Augustine

## Hymnody

From the bondage that oppressed us,  
From sin’s fetters that possessed us,  
From the grief that sore distressed us,  
We, the captives, now are free.

—Come, Your Hearts and Voices  
Raising (*LSB* 375:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F33)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope 25–38

30 MAY

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup>Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause  
against an ungodly | people,\*  
from the deceitful and unjust man  
de- | liver me!

<sup>2</sup>For you are the God in whom I take refuge;  
why have you re- | jected me?\*

Why do I go about mourning because  
of the oppression of the | enemy?

<sup>3</sup>Send out your light and your truth;  
let them | lead me;\*

let them bring me to your holy hill  
and to your | dwelling!

<sup>4</sup>Then I will go to the altar of God,  
to God my ex- | ceeding joy,\*  
and I will praise you with the lyre,  
O | God, my God.

<sup>5</sup>Why are you cast down, O my soul, and  
why are you in turmoil with- | in me?\*

Hope in God; for I shall again praise  
him, my salvation | and my God.

—Psalm 43

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 111*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Ecclesiastes 7:11–29**

<sup>11</sup>Wisdom is good with an inheritance,  
an advantage to those who see the  
sun.

<sup>12</sup>For the protection of wisdom is like the  
protection of money,  
and the advantage of knowledge  
is that wisdom preserves the life  
of him who has it.

<sup>13</sup>Consider the work of God:  
who can make straight what he has  
made crooked?

<sup>14</sup>In the day of prosperity be joyful, and  
in the day of adversity consider: God has  
made the one as well as the other, so that  
man may not find out anything that will be  
after him.

<sup>15</sup>In my vain life I have seen everything.  
There is a righteous man who perishes in  
his righteousness, and there is a wicked  
man who prolongs his life in his evil-doing.

<sup>16</sup>Be not overly righteous, and do not make  
yourself too wise. Why should you destroy  
yourself? <sup>17</sup>Be not overly wicked, neither be a  
fool. Why should you die before your time?

<sup>18</sup>It is good that you should take hold of this,  
and from that withhold not your hand, for  
the one who fears God shall come out from  
both of them.

<sup>19</sup>Wisdom gives strength to the wise man  
more than ten rulers who are in a city.

<sup>20</sup>Surely there is not a righteous man on  
earth who does good and never sins.

<sup>21</sup>Do not take to heart all the things that  
people say, lest you hear your servant cursing  
you. <sup>22</sup>Your heart knows that many times you  
yourself have cursed others.

<sup>23</sup>All this I have tested by wisdom. I said,  
“I will be wise,” but it was far from me. <sup>24</sup>That  
which has been is far off, and deep, very  
deep; who can find it out?

<sup>25</sup>I turned my heart to know and  
to search out and to seek wisdom and  
the scheme of things, and to know the  
wickedness of folly and the foolishness that is  
madness. <sup>26</sup>And I find something more bitter  
than death: the woman whose heart is snares  
and nets, and whose hands are fetters. He  
who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner  
is taken by her. <sup>27</sup>Behold, this is what I found,  
says the Preacher, while adding one thing  
to another to find the scheme of things—  
<sup>28</sup>which my soul has sought repeatedly, but I

have not found. One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found. <sup>29</sup>See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.

### New Testament Reading: John 8:39–59

You Are of Your Father the Devil

<sup>39</sup>They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, <sup>40</sup>but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>41</sup>You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup>Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. <sup>44</sup>You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup>But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. <sup>46</sup>Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup>Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

Before Abraham Was, I Am

<sup>48</sup>The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” <sup>49</sup>Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and

you dishonor me. <sup>50</sup>Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. <sup>51</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”

<sup>52</sup>The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ <sup>53</sup>Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?” <sup>54</sup>Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’ <sup>55</sup>But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. <sup>56</sup>Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” <sup>57</sup>So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” <sup>58</sup>Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” <sup>59</sup>So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

### Writing

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies and things like these. [Galatians 5:19–21]

Therefore, if you cannot discern this, at least believe the Scriptures. They will not lie to you, and they know your flesh better than you yourself. . . . Believe the Scriptures, which pronounce sentence upon you. In short, the less you feel your sins and

infirmities, the more reason you have to go to the Sacrament to seek help and a remedy.

In the second place, look around you. See whether you are also in the world, or if you do not know it, ask your neighbors about it. If you are in the world, do not think that there will be lack of sins and misery. Just begin to act as though you would be godly and cling to the Gospel. See whether no one will become your enemy, and, furthermore, do you harm, wrong, and violence, and likewise give you cause for sin and vice. . . .

Besides this, you will also have the devil about you. You will not entirely tread him under foot [Luke 10:19], because our Lord Christ Himself could not entirely avoid him. Now, what is the devil? Nothing other than what the Scriptures call him, a liar and a murderer [John 8:44]. He is a liar, to lead the heart astray from God's Word and to blind it, so that you cannot feel your distress or come to Christ. He is a murderer, who cannot bear to see you live one single hour. If you could see how many knives, darts, and arrows are every moment aimed at you [Ephesians 6:16], you would be glad to come to the Sacrament as often as possible. But there is no reason why we walk about so securely and carelessly, except that we neither think nor believe that we are in the flesh and in this wicked world or in the devil's kingdom.

—Large Catechism V 75–82

### Hymnody

The God of Abr'ham praise,  
 Who reigns enthroned above;  
 Ancient of everlasting days  
 And God of love.  
 Jehovah, great I AM!  
 By earth and heav'n confessed;

I bow and bless the sacred name  
 Forever blest.

—The God of Abraham Praise  
 (LSB 798:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, You have given us grace to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity by the confession of a true faith and to worship the Unity in the power of the Divine Majesty. Keep us steadfast in this faith and defend us from all adversities; for You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, live and reign, one God, now and forever. (L52)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope 39–51

## 31 MAY

### *The Visitation*

### Psalmody

<sup>5</sup> Blessed is he whose help is the God of | Jacob,\*

whose hope is in the | LORD his God,

<sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is | in them,\*

who keeps faith for- | ever;

<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for | the oppressed,\* who gives food to the | hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;

<sup>8</sup> the LORD opens the eyes | of the blind.\*

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the | righteous.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD watches over the sojourners;  
he upholds the widow and the | fatherless,\*  
but the way of the wicked  
he brings to | ruin.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD will reign for- | ever,\*  
your God, O Zion, to all  
generations. | Praise the LORD!  
Praise the Lord!  
—Psalm 146:5–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 146*

### Old Testament Reading: Ecclesiastes 8:1–17

Keep the King's Command

<sup>1</sup>Who is like the wise?  
And who knows the interpretation  
of a thing?  
A man's wisdom makes his face shine,  
and the hardness of his face  
is changed.

<sup>2</sup>I say: Keep the king's command, because  
of God's oath to him. <sup>3</sup>Be not hasty to go  
from his presence. Do not take your stand in  
an evil cause, for he does whatever he pleases.  
<sup>4</sup>For the word of the king is supreme, and  
who may say to him, "What are you doing?"  
<sup>5</sup>Whoever keeps a command will know no  
evil thing, and the wise heart will know the  
proper time and the just way. <sup>6</sup>For there is  
a time and a way for everything, although  
man's trouble lies heavy on him. <sup>7</sup>For he does  
not know what is to be, for who can tell him  
how it will be? <sup>8</sup>No man has power to retain  
the spirit, or power over the day of death.  
There is no discharge from war, nor will  
wickedness deliver those who are given to it.  
<sup>9</sup>All this I observed while applying my heart  
to all that is done under the sun, when man  
had power over man to his hurt.

Those Who Fear God Will Do Well

<sup>10</sup>Then I saw the wicked buried. They  
used to go in and out of the holy place and  
were praised in the city where they had done  
such things. This also is vanity. <sup>11</sup>Because the  
sentence against an evil deed is not executed  
speedily, the heart of the children of man is  
fully set to do evil. <sup>12</sup>Though a sinner does  
evil a hundred times and prolongs his life,  
yet I know that it will be well with those who  
fear God, because they fear before him. <sup>13</sup>But  
it will not be well with the wicked, neither  
will he prolong his days like a shadow,  
because he does not fear before God.

Man Cannot Know God's Ways

<sup>14</sup>There is a vanity that takes place on  
earth, that there are righteous people to  
whom it happens according to the deeds of  
the wicked, and there are wicked people to  
whom it happens according to the deeds of  
the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.  
<sup>15</sup>And I commend joy, for man has no good  
thing under the sun but to eat and drink and  
be joyful, for this will go with him in his  
toil through the days of his life that God has  
given him under the sun.

<sup>16</sup>When I applied my heart to know  
wisdom, and to see the business that is done  
on earth, how neither day nor night do one's  
eyes see sleep, <sup>17</sup>then I saw all the work of  
God, that man cannot find out the work that  
is done under the sun. However much man  
may toil in seeking, he will not find it out.  
Even though a wise man claims to know, he  
cannot find it out.

### New Testament Reading: John 9:1–23

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

<sup>1</sup>As he passed by, he saw a man blind  
from birth. <sup>2</sup>And his disciples asked him,

“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup>Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup>and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

<sup>8</sup>The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup>Some said, “It is he.” Others said, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” <sup>10</sup>So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” <sup>11</sup>He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed and received my sight.” <sup>12</sup>They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup>Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” <sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup>So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

<sup>18</sup>The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight <sup>19</sup>and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” <sup>20</sup>His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. <sup>21</sup>But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” <sup>22</sup>(His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) <sup>23</sup>Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

## Writing

In accordance with this design, Mary the Virgin is found obedient, saying, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.” But Eve was disobedient; for she did not obey when as yet she was a virgin. And even as she, having indeed a husband, Adam, but being nevertheless as yet a virgin . . . having become disobedient, was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race; so also did Mary, having a man betrothed [to her], and being nevertheless a virgin, by yielding obedience, became the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race. And on this account does the law term a woman betrothed to a man, the wife of him who had betrothed her, although she was as yet a virgin; thus indicating the back-reference from Mary to Eve, because what is joined together could not otherwise be put asunder than by inversion of the process by which these

bonds of union had arisen; so that the former ties be cancelled by the latter, that the latter may set the former again at liberty. . . .

For the Lord, having been born “the First-begotten of the dead,” and receiving into His bosom the ancient fathers, has regenerated them into the life of God, He having been made himself the beginning of those that live, as Adam became the beginning of those who die. Wherefore also Luke, commencing the genealogy with the Lord, carried it back to Adam, indicating that it was He who regenerated them into the Gospel of life, and not they Him. And thus also it was that the knot of Eve’s disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith.

—Irenaeus

### Hymnody

Why, what hath my Lord done?  
 What makes this rage and spite?  
 He made the lame to run,  
 He gave the blind their sight.  
 Sweet injuries!  
 Yet they at these  
 Themselves displease  
 And ’gainst Him rise.

—My Song Is Love Unknown  
 (LSB 430:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You chose the virgin Mary to be the mother of Your Son and made known through her Your gracious regard for the poor and lowly and despised. Grant that we may receive Your Word in humility and faith, and so be made one with Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns

with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F18)

### The Visitation

John the Baptizer and Jesus, the two great figures of salvation history, now come together in the visit to Elizabeth by the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:39–45), both of whom conceived their children under miraculous circumstances. Thus John is brought into the presence of Jesus while they are still in their mothers’ wombs. This presence of the Lord causes a response by the child John as he leaps in Elizabeth’s womb. John’s response to the presence of Jesus, the Messiah, foreshadows John’s own role as forerunner. Already now, a new creation is beginning, and a baby still in the womb hails the new creation’s inception. Foreshadowed in John’s leap are the miracles of Jesus, who will cause all creation to leap at His presence: “The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them” (Luke 7:22). The incarnate presence of the Messiah also evokes a response from Elizabeth, who proclaims Mary’s blessedness. Mary’s Magnificat (1:46–55) provides the theological significance of this meeting as Mary sums up her place in salvation history. Mary’s song is a hymn to God for His gracious gifts to the least in this world, whom He has lifted up out of lowliness solely because of His grace and mercy.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope 52–67

1 JUNE

*Justin, Martyr*

**Psalmody**

- <sup>4</sup>His lightnings light | up the world;\*  
the earth sees and | trembles.
- <sup>5</sup>The mountains melt like wax be- | fore  
the LORD,\*  
before the Lord of | all the earth.
- <sup>6</sup>The heavens proclaim his | righteousness,\*  
and all the peoples see his | glory.
- <sup>7</sup>All worshipers of images are put to shame,  
who make their boast in worthless | idols;\*  
worship him, | all you gods!
- <sup>8</sup>Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters  
of Ju- | dah rejoice,\*  
because of your judgments, | O LORD.
- <sup>9</sup>For you, O LORD, are most high  
over | all the earth,\*  
you are exalted far a- | bove all gods.
- <sup>10</sup>O you who love the LORD, hate | evil!\*  
He preserves the lives of his saints;  
he delivers them from the hand  
of the | wicked.
- <sup>11</sup>Light is sown for the | righteous,\*  
and joy for the up- | right in heart.
- <sup>12</sup>Rejoice in the LORD, O you | righteous,\*  
and give thanks to his | holy name!  
—Psalm 97:4–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 115*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Ecclesiastes 9:1–17**

Death Comes to All

<sup>1</sup>But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God. Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him. <sup>2</sup>It is the same for all, since the

same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. <sup>3</sup>This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. <sup>4</sup>But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. <sup>5</sup>For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. <sup>6</sup>Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.

Enjoy Life with the One You Love

<sup>7</sup>Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do.

<sup>8</sup>Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head.

<sup>9</sup>Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. <sup>10</sup>Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

Wisdom Better than Folly

<sup>11</sup>Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. <sup>12</sup>For man does not know his time.

Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.

<sup>13</sup>I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me.

<sup>14</sup>There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it. <sup>15</sup>But there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man. <sup>16</sup>But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard.

<sup>17</sup>The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.

### **New Testament Reading: John 9:24–41**

<sup>24</sup>So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." <sup>25</sup>He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." <sup>26</sup>They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" <sup>27</sup>He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" <sup>28</sup>And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup>We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." <sup>30</sup>The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup>We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God

and does his will, God listens to him. <sup>32</sup>Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. <sup>33</sup>If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." <sup>34</sup>They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

<sup>35</sup>Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" <sup>36</sup>He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." <sup>38</sup>He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." <sup>40</sup>Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" <sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains."

### **Writing**

There remains the oft-repeated statement in Eccl. 9:1–2: "The righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God, and man does not know if he is worthy of love or hatred, but all things are kept uncertain in the future." Therefore [they say] in this life believers are uncertain whether they are under God's love or His hatred, but this will only be made manifest in the coming age.

But this passage does not read this way in the Hebrew, the Greek, in Jerome's translation, nor among the ancient writers who commented on the Book of Ecclesiastes. The sense is entirely clear. For the author adds this because things turn out equally for the righteous and the ungodly, for the

good and the evil, that is, we must not and cannot determine on the basis of the outcome whether we are pleasing to God. But it does not follow, because we cannot make a determination from the outcome, that therefore faith on the basis of the Word of God must remain uncertain.

In another place in the same book [3:19] there is this statement: “The spirit of man is mortal, just as the spirit of beasts.” He is saying that on the basis of external events it is impossible to know whether the spirit of man differs from that of an animal, because the death of both is the same. Bernard explains: Reason of itself cannot know this, but faith, the truth of the Word of God, and the Spirit help us. And so in the same chapter Solomon soon says: “Your works are pleasing to God” [9:7].

—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

It was grace in Christ that called me,  
 Taught my darkened heart and mind;  
 Else the world had yet enthralled me,  
 To Thy heav’nly glories blind.  
 Now I worship none above Thee;  
 For Thy grace alone I thirst,  
 Knowing well that, if I love Thee,  
 Thou, O Lord, didst love me first.

—Lord, ’Tis Not That I Did Choose  
 Thee (*LSB* 573:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, You found Your martyr Justin wandering from teacher to teacher, searching for the true God. Grant that all who seek for a deeper knowledge of the sublime wisdom of Your eternal Word may be found by You, who

sent Your Son to seek and to save the lost; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1034)

### Justin, Martyr

Born at the beginning of the second century, Justin was raised in a pagan family. He was a student of philosophy who converted to the Christian faith and became a teacher in Ephesus and Rome. After refusing to make pagan sacrifices, he was arrested, tried, and executed, along with six other believers. The official Roman court proceedings of his trial before Rusticius, a Roman prelate, document his confession of faith. The account of his martyrdom became a source of great encouragement to the early Christian community. Much of what we know of early liturgical practice comes from Justin.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope 68–82

## 2 JUNE

### Psalmody

<sup>3</sup> When my enemies | turn back,\*  
 they stumble and perish  
 before your | presence.

<sup>4</sup> For you have maintained my | just cause;\*  
 you have sat on the throne,  
 giving righteous | judgment.

<sup>5</sup> You have rebuked the nations;  
 you have made the wicked | perish;\*  
 you have blotted out their name forever  
 and | ever.

<sup>6</sup>The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins; their cities you | rooted out;\*  
the very memory of them has | perished.

<sup>13</sup>Be gracious to me, | O LORD!\*  
See my affliction from those who  
hate me, O you who lift me up from  
the | gates of death,

<sup>14</sup>that I may recount all your | praises,\*  
that in the gates of the daughter of Zion  
I may rejoice in your sal- | vation.  
—Psalm 9:3–6, 13–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 23*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Ecclesiastes 10:1–20**

<sup>1</sup>Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment  
give off a stench;  
so a little folly outweighs wisdom  
and honor.

<sup>2</sup>A wise man's heart inclines him  
to the right,  
but a fool's heart to the left.

<sup>3</sup>Even when the fool walks on the road,  
he lacks sense,  
and he says to everyone that he  
is a fool.

<sup>4</sup>If the anger of the ruler rises against you,  
do not leave your place,  
for calmness will lay great offenses  
to rest.

<sup>5</sup>There is an evil that I have seen under  
the sun, as it were an error proceeding from  
the ruler: <sup>6</sup>folly is set in many high places,  
and the rich sit in a low place. <sup>7</sup>I have seen  
slaves on horses, and princes walking on the  
ground like slaves.

<sup>8</sup>He who digs a pit will fall into it,  
and a serpent will bite him who  
breaks through a wall.

<sup>9</sup>He who quarries stones is hurt by them,  
and he who splits logs is endangered  
by them.

<sup>10</sup>If the iron is blunt, and one does not  
sharpen the edge,  
he must use more strength,  
but wisdom helps one to succeed.

<sup>11</sup>If the serpent bites before it is charmed,  
there is no advantage to the charmer.

<sup>12</sup>The words of a wise man's mouth win  
him favor,  
but the lips of a fool consume him.

<sup>13</sup>The beginning of the words of his mouth  
is foolishness,  
and the end of his talk  
is evil madness.

<sup>14</sup>A fool multiplies words,  
though no man knows what is to be,  
and who can tell him what  
will be after him?

<sup>15</sup>The toil of a fool wearies him,  
for he does not know the way  
to the city.

<sup>16</sup>Woe to you, O land, when your king  
is a child,  
and your princes feast  
in the morning!

<sup>17</sup>Happy are you, O land, when your king  
is the son of the nobility,  
and your princes feast  
at the proper time,  
for strength, and not for  
drunkenness!

<sup>18</sup>Through sloth the roof sinks in,  
and through indolence  
the house leaks.

<sup>19</sup>Bread is made for laughter,  
and wine gladdens life,  
and money answers everything.

<sup>20</sup>Even in your thoughts,  
do not curse the king,  
nor in your bedroom curse the rich,  
for a bird of the air will carry your voice,  
or some winged creature  
tell the matter.

**New Testament Reading: John 10:1–21**

I Am the Good Shepherd

<sup>1</sup>“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup>But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup>This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup>So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup>I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the

sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

<sup>19</sup>There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. <sup>20</sup>Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” <sup>21</sup>Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

**Writing**

The entire Holy Trinity—God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—directs all people to Christ, as to the Book of Life, in whom they should seek the Father’s eternal election. For this has been decided by the Father from eternity: whom He would save He would save through Christ. Christ Himself says, “No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). And again, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved” (John 10:9)

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 66

It is not only necessary that the pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented for the preservation of pure doctrine and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the Church, but it is also necessary that the

opponents who teach otherwise be reproved (1 Timothy 3; [2 Timothy 3:16;] Titus 1:9). Faithful shepherds, as Luther says, should do both things: (a) feed or nourish the lambs and (b) resist the wolves. Then the sheep may flee from strange voices (John 10:5–12) and may separate the precious from the worthless (Jeremiah 15:19).

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Summary, Foundation, Rule, and Norm 14

Thank God, <today> a seven-year-old child knows what the Church is, namely, the holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd [John 10:11–16]. For the children pray, “I believe in one holy Christian Church.” This holiness [comes] . . . from God’s Word and true faith.

—Smalcald Articles III XII 2–3

### Hymnody

O God, let us hear when our Shepherd  
shall call  
In accents persuasive and tender,  
That while there is time we make haste,  
one and all,  
And find Him, our mighty defender.  
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!

—A Multitude Comes from the East  
and West (*LSB* 510:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, merciful Father, since You have wakened from death the Shepherd of Your sheep, grant us Your Holy Spirit that when we hear the voice of our Shepherd we may know Him who calls us each by name and follow where He leads; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives

and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L43)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Doctors and Preachers Who Subscribed to the Augsburg Confession and Apology AD 1537

## 3 JUNE

### Psalmody

- <sup>5</sup> I consider the | days of old,\*  
the years | long ago.
- <sup>6</sup> I said, “Let me remember my song in the  
night; let me meditate | in my heart.”\*  
Then my spirit made a dil- | igent search:
- <sup>7</sup> “Will the Lord spurn for- | ever,\*  
and never again be | favorable?”
- <sup>8</sup> Has his steadfast love for- | ever ceased?\*
- Are his promises at an end | for all time?
- <sup>9</sup> Has God forgotten to be | gracious?\*
- Has he in anger shut up  
his com- | passion?”
- <sup>10</sup> Then I said, “I will ap- | peal to this,\*  
to the years of the right hand  
of the | Most High.”
- <sup>11</sup> I will remember the deeds | of the LORD;\*
- yes, I will remember your  
won- | ders of old.
- <sup>14</sup> You are the God who works | wonders;\*
- you have made known your might  
among the | peoples.
- <sup>15</sup> You with your arm redeemed  
your | people,\*  
the children of Jacob and | Joseph.
- Psalm 77:5–11, 14–15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 82*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Ecclesiastes 11:1–10**

Cast Your Bread upon the Waters

- <sup>1</sup>Cast your bread upon the waters,  
for you will find it after many days.  
<sup>2</sup>Give a portion to seven, or even to eight,  
for you know not what disaster may  
happen on earth.  
<sup>3</sup>If the clouds are full of rain,  
they empty themselves on the earth,  
and if a tree falls to the south  
or to the north,  
in the place where the tree falls, there  
it will lie.  
<sup>4</sup>He who observes the wind will not sow,  
and he who regards the clouds will  
not reap.

<sup>5</sup>As you do not know the way the spirit  
comes to the bones in the womb of a woman  
with child, so you do not know the work of  
God who makes everything.

<sup>6</sup>In the morning sow your seed, and at  
evening withhold not your hand, for you do  
not know which will prosper, this or that, or  
whether both alike will be good.

<sup>7</sup>Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the  
eyes to see the sun.

<sup>8</sup>So if a person lives many years, let him  
rejoice in them all; but let him remember  
that the days of darkness will be many. All  
that comes is vanity.

<sup>9</sup>Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,  
and let your heart cheer you in the days of  
your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart  
and the sight of your eyes. But know that  
for all these things God will bring you  
into judgment.

<sup>10</sup>Remove vexation from your heart, and  
put away pain from your body, for youth and  
the dawn of life are vanity.

**New Testament Reading: John 10:22–42**

I and the Father Are One

<sup>22</sup>At that time the Feast of Dedication  
took place at Jerusalem. It was winter,  
<sup>23</sup>and Jesus was walking in the temple, in  
the colonnade of Solomon. <sup>24</sup>So the Jews  
gathered around him and said to him, “How  
long will you keep us in suspense? If you are  
the Christ, tell us plainly.” <sup>25</sup>Jesus answered  
them, “I told you, and you do not believe.  
The works that I do in my Father’s name bear  
witness about me, <sup>26</sup>but you do not believe  
because you are not part of my flock. <sup>27</sup>My  
sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and  
they follow me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and  
they will never perish, and no one will snatch  
them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has  
given them to me, is greater than all, and no  
one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s  
hand. <sup>30</sup>I and the Father are one.”

<sup>31</sup>The Jews picked up stones again to  
stone him. <sup>32</sup>Jesus answered them, “I have  
shown you many good works from the  
Father; for which of them are you going to  
stone me?” <sup>33</sup>The Jews answered him, “It  
is not for a good work that we are going to  
stone you but for blasphemy, because you,  
being a man, make yourself God.” <sup>34</sup>Jesus  
answered them, “Is it not written in your  
Law, ‘I said, you are gods’? <sup>35</sup>If he called them  
gods to whom the word of God came—and  
Scripture cannot be broken—<sup>36</sup>do you say  
of him whom the Father consecrated and  
sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’  
because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? <sup>37</sup>If I  
am not doing the works of my Father, then  
do not believe me; <sup>38</sup>but if I do them, even  
though you do not believe me, believe the  
works, that you may know and understand  
that the Father is in me and I am in the

Father.”<sup>39</sup> Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.

<sup>40</sup>He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. <sup>41</sup>And many came to him. And they said, “John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.” <sup>42</sup>And many believed in him there.

## Writing

We should set up the following clear argument, which is sure and cannot fail: All Scripture is inspired by God. It is not for self-confidence and lack of repentance, but “for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). Also, everything in God’s Word has been written for us, not so that we should be driven to despair by it, but so that “through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Romans 15:4). Therefore, there is no question that lack of repentance or despair should not in any way be caused or strengthened by the sound sense or right use of this teaching about God’s eternal foreknowledge. The Scriptures teach this doctrine only to direct us to the Word (Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 1:7), to encourage repentance (2 Timothy 3:16) and godliness (Ephesians 1:14; John 15:3), and to strengthen faith and assure us of our salvation (Ephesians 1:13; John 10:27–30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14).

If we want to think or speak correctly and usefully about eternal election, or the predestination or preordination of God’s children to eternal life, we should make it our custom to avoid speculating about God’s bare, secret, concealed, mysterious foreknowledge. Instead, we should think or

speaking about how God’s counsel, purpose, and ordination in Christ Jesus—who is the true Book of Life—is revealed to us through the Word. In other words, the entire teaching about God’s purpose, counsel, will, and ordination belongs to our redemption, call, justification, and salvation. They should be treated together the way Paul treats them and has explained this article (Romans 8:29–30; Ephesians 1:4–10) and as Christ treated it in the parable of Matthew 22:1–14.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 12–14

## Hymnody

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“Come unto Me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon My breast.”  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
So weary, worn, and sad;  
I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad.

—I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say  
(LSB 699:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, You fulfilled Your promise by sending the gift of the Holy Spirit to unite disciples of all nations in the cross and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ. By the preaching of the Gospel spread this gift to the ends of the earth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L49)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Small Catechism Preface 1–8

4 JUNE

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup>Hear my cry, | O God,\*  
listen | to my prayer;
- <sup>2</sup>from the end of the earth I call to you when  
my | heart is faint.\*  
Lead me to the rock that  
is high- | er than I,
- <sup>3</sup>for you have been my | refuge,\*  
a strong tower against the | enemy.
- <sup>4</sup>Let me dwell in your tent for- | ever!\*
- Let me take refuge under  
the shelter | of your wings!
- <sup>5</sup>For you, O God, have | heard my vows;\*  
you have given me the heritage of those  
who | fear your name.
- <sup>6</sup>Prolong the life | of the king;\*  
may his years endure to  
all gener- | ations!
- <sup>7</sup>May he be enthroned forever  
be- | fore God;\*
- appoint steadfast love and faithfulness  
to watch | over him!
- <sup>8</sup>So will I ever sing praises | to your name,\*  
as I perform my vows day | after day.  
—Psalm 61

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 27*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Ecclesiastes 12:1–14**

Remember Your Creator in Your Youth

<sup>1</sup>Remember also your Creator in the days  
of your youth, before the evil days come and  
the years draw near of which you will say, “I  
have no pleasure in them”; <sup>2</sup>before the sun  
and the light and the moon and the stars  
are darkened and the clouds return after  
the rain, <sup>3</sup>in the day when the keepers of the

house tremble, and the strong men are bent,  
and the grinders cease because they are few,  
and those who look through the windows  
are dimmed, <sup>4</sup>and the doors on the street  
are shut—when the sound of the grinding is  
low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird,  
and all the daughters of song are brought  
low—<sup>5</sup>they are afraid also of what is high,  
and terrors are in the way; the almond tree  
blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along,  
and desire fails, because man is going to his  
eternal home, and the mourners go about the  
streets—<sup>6</sup>before the silver cord is snapped,  
or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher  
is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel  
broken at the cistern, <sup>7</sup>and the dust returns to  
the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to  
God who gave it. <sup>8</sup>Vanity of vanities, says the  
Preacher; all is vanity.

Fear God and Keep His Commandments

<sup>9</sup>Besides being wise, the Preacher also  
taught the people knowledge, weighing and  
studying and arranging many proverbs with  
great care. <sup>10</sup>The Preacher sought to find  
words of delight, and uprightly he wrote  
words of truth.

<sup>11</sup>The words of the wise are like goads,  
and like nails firmly fixed are the collected  
sayings; they are given by one Shepherd.

<sup>12</sup>My son, beware of anything beyond these.  
Of making many books there is no end, and  
much study is a weariness of the flesh.

<sup>13</sup>The end of the matter; all has  
been heard. Fear God and keep his  
commandments, for this is the whole duty  
of man. <sup>14</sup>For God will bring every deed into  
judgment, with every secret thing, whether  
good or evil.

**New Testament Reading: John 11:1–16**

## The Death of Lazarus

<sup>1</sup>Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup>It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup>So the sisters sent to him, saying, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” <sup>4</sup>But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

<sup>5</sup>Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup>So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. <sup>7</sup>Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” <sup>8</sup>The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?” <sup>9</sup>Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. <sup>10</sup>But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” <sup>11</sup>After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.” <sup>12</sup>The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” <sup>13</sup>Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup>Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, <sup>15</sup>and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” <sup>16</sup>So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

**Writing**

You see how [Jesus] gives full scope to death. He grants free reign to the grave. He allows corruption to set in. . . . He allows the realm of darkness to seize his friend, drag him down to the underworld, and take possession of him. He acts like this so that human hope may perish entirely and human despair reach its lowest depths. The deed He is about to accomplish may then clearly be seen to be the work of God, not of man.

[Jesus] waited for Lazarus to die, staying in the same place until he could tell his disciples that he was dead. Then he announced his intention of going to him. “Lazarus is dead,” he said, “and I am glad.” Was this a sign of his love for his friend? Not so. Christ was glad because their sorrow over the death of Lazarus was soon to be changed into joy at his restoration to life. “I am glad for your sake,” he said. Why for their sake? Because the death and resurrection of Lazarus were a perfect prefiguration of the death and resurrection of the Lord himself. What the Lord was soon to achieve in himself had already been achieved in his servant. . . . This explains why he said to them, “I am glad for your sake not to have been there, because now you will believe.” It was necessary that Lazarus die, so that the faith of the disciples might also rise with him from the dead.

—Peter Chrysologus

## Hymnody

Be still, my soul; though dearest  
friends depart  
And all is darkened in this vale of tears;  
Then you will better know His love,  
His heart,  
Who comes to soothe your sorrows  
and your fears.  
Be still, my soul; your Jesus can repay  
From His own fullness all He takes away.  
—Be Still, My Soul (LSB 752:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by Your great goodness  
mercifully look upon Your people that we  
may be governed and preserved evermore in  
body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your  
Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with  
You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
forever. (L27)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Small Catechism Preface 9–18

## 5 JUNE

*Boniface of Mainz, Missionary to Germany*

## Psalmody

<sup>12</sup>For he delivers the needy | when he calls,\*  
the poor and him who has no | helper.  
<sup>13</sup>He has pity on the weak and the | needy,\*  
and saves the lives of the | needy.  
<sup>14</sup>From oppression and violence  
he re- | deems their life,\*  
and precious is their blood | in his sight.

<sup>15</sup>Long may he live; may gold of Sheba  
be giv- | en to him!\*  
May prayer be made for him continually,  
and blessings invoked for  
him | all the day!

<sup>16</sup>May there be abundance of grain in the  
land; on the tops of the mountains may it  
wave; may its fruit be like | Lebanon;\*  
and may people blossom in the cities  
like the grass | of the field!

<sup>17</sup>May his name endure forever, his fame  
continue as long | as the sun!\*  
May people be blessed in him, all nations  
call him | blessed!

<sup>18</sup>Blessèd be the LORD, the God of | Israel,\*  
who alone does | wondrous things.

<sup>19</sup>Blessèd be his glorious name for- | ever;\*  
may the whole earth be filled  
with his glory! Amen and | Amen!  
—Psalm 72:12–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 63*

## Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 1:8–33

The Enticement of Sinners

<sup>8</sup>Hear, my son, your father's instruction,  
and forsake not your mother's teaching,  
<sup>9</sup>for they are a graceful garland for your head  
and pendants for your neck.  
<sup>10</sup>My son, if sinners entice you,  
do not consent.  
<sup>11</sup>If they say, "Come with us,  
let us lie in wait for blood;  
let us ambush the innocent  
without reason;  
<sup>12</sup>like Sheol let us swallow them alive,  
and whole, like those who go down  
to the pit;  
<sup>13</sup>we shall find all precious goods,  
we shall fill our houses with plunder;

<sup>14</sup>throw in your lot among us;  
we will all have one purse”—

<sup>15</sup>my son, do not walk in the way with them;  
hold back your foot from their paths,

<sup>16</sup>for their feet run to evil,  
and they make haste to shed blood.

<sup>17</sup>For in vain is a net spread  
in the sight of any bird,

<sup>18</sup>but these men lie in wait for their  
own blood;  
they set an ambush for their own lives.

<sup>19</sup>Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy  
for unjust gain;  
it takes away the life of its possessors.

<sup>20</sup>Wisdom cries aloud in the street,  
in the markets she raises her voice;

<sup>21</sup>at the head of the noisy streets she cries out;  
at the entrance of the city gates  
she speaks:

<sup>22</sup>“How long, O simple ones,  
will you love being simple?  
How long will scoffers delight  
in their scoffing  
and fools hate knowledge?”

<sup>23</sup>If you turn at my reproof,  
behold, I will pour out my spirit to you;  
I will make my words known to you.

<sup>24</sup>Because I have called and you refused  
to listen,  
have stretched out my hand and no one  
has heeded,

<sup>25</sup>because you have ignored all my counsel  
and would have none of my reproof,

<sup>26</sup>I also will laugh at your calamity;  
I will mock when terror strikes you,

<sup>27</sup>when terror strikes you like a storm  
and your calamity comes  
like a whirlwind,  
when distress and anguish  
come upon you.

<sup>28</sup>Then they will call upon me,  
but I will not answer;  
they will seek me diligently  
but will not find me.

<sup>29</sup>Because they hated knowledge  
and did not choose the fear of the LORD,

<sup>30</sup>would have none of my counsel  
and despised all my reproof,

<sup>31</sup>therefore they shall eat the fruit  
of their way,  
and have their fill of their own devices.

<sup>32</sup>For the simple are killed by their  
turning away,  
and the complacency of fools  
destroys them;

<sup>33</sup>but whoever listens to me will dwell secure  
and will be at ease, without dread  
of disaster.”

### New Testament Reading: John 11:17–37

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

<sup>17</sup>Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup>Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, <sup>19</sup>and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. <sup>20</sup>So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. <sup>21</sup>Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” <sup>24</sup>Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup>and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” <sup>27</sup>She said to him, “Yes, Lord;

I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

Jesus Weeps

<sup>28</sup>When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.”  
<sup>29</sup>And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup>Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup>When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup>Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. <sup>34</sup>And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” <sup>35</sup>Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup>So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” <sup>37</sup>But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

**Writing**

Behold, your Redeemer anointed your blind eyes with the salve of His incarnation, so that you, who could not look upon God in His glory in the secret place of His majesty, might look upon God in the form of a man; and beholding Him, acknowledge Him; and acknowledging Him, love Him; and loving Him, do your utmost with all your might to come to His glory. He was made flesh that He might call you back to the things of the spirit. He was made a partaker of

your changeableness that He might make you a partaker of His unchangeableness. He condescended to your lowliness that He might exalt you to His high loftiness. . . . In Bethany, which is by interpretation “the house of obedience,” He raised Lazarus from the dead, showing that all, who by the earnest endeavor of a good will die to the world and rest in the bosom of obedience, shall be raised by Him to life eternal. When He delivered His body and blood to His disciples in the mystical supper, He humbly washed their feet, teaching us that the sacred mysteries should be celebrated with deeds of purity and devout humbleness of mind. When He was to be glorified by the splendor of His holy resurrection, He endured the mocking of traitors, the cruelty of insults, the shame of the cross, the bitterness of gall, and at the last death itself, admonishing His servants thereby that those who desire after death to attain glory must bear the troubles and labors of this present life and the oppressions of the wicked, not only without murmuring but also with love and desire and cheerful welcome to all, which is hard in this world for the sake of the eternal reward.

—Anselm

**Hymnody**

Jesus has come! Now see bonds rent asunder!  
 Fetters of death now dissolve, disappear.  
 See Him burst through with a voice as of  
 thunder!

He sets us free from our guilt and our fear,  
 Lifts us from shame to the place of His honor.  
 Jesus has come! Hear the roll of God’s  
 thunder!

—Jesus Has Come and Brings Pleasure  
 (LSB 533:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You called Boniface to be a witness and martyr in Germany, and by his labor and suffering, You raised up a people for Your own possession. Pour out Your Holy Spirit upon Your Church in every land, that by the service and sacrifice of many, Your holy name may be glorified and Your kingdom enlarged; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1035)

## Boniface of Mainz

Boniface was born in the late seventh century in England. Though he was educated, became a monk, and was ordained as a presbyter in England, he was inspired by the example of others to become a missionary. Upon receiving a papal commission in AD 719 to work in Germany, Boniface devoted himself to planting, organizing, and reforming churches and monasteries in Hesse, Thuringia, and Bavaria. After becoming an archbishop, Boniface was assigned to the See of Mainz in AD 743. Ten years later, he resigned his position to engage in mission work in the Netherlands. On June 5, 754, while awaiting a group of converts for confirmation, Boniface and his companions were murdered by a band of pagans. Boniface is known as the apostle and missionary to the Germans.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Small Catechism Preface 19–27

## 6 JUNE

### Psalmody

- <sup>169</sup> Let my cry come before you, | O LORD,\*  
give me understanding  
according | to your word!
- <sup>170</sup> Let my plea come be- | fore you,\*  
deliver me according | to your word.
- <sup>171</sup> My lips will | pour forth praise,\*  
for you teach me your | statutes.
- <sup>172</sup> My tongue will sing | of your word,\*  
for all your command- | ments are right.
- <sup>173</sup> Let your hand be ready to | help me,\*  
for I have chosen your | precepts.
- <sup>174</sup> I long for your salvation, | O LORD,\*  
and your law is | my delight.
- <sup>175</sup> Let my soul live and | praise you,\*  
and let your just decrees | help me.
- <sup>176</sup> I have gone astray like a lost sheep;  
seek your | servant,\*  
for I do not forget  
your com- | mandments.  
—Psalm 119:169–176

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 89:46–52*

### Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 3:5–24

[Trust in the Lord with All Your Heart]

- <sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own  
understanding.
- <sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.
- <sup>7</sup> Be not wise in your own eyes;  
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.
- <sup>8</sup> It will be healing to your flesh  
and refreshment to your bones.
- <sup>9</sup> Honor the LORD with your wealth  
and with the firstfruits  
of all your produce;

<sup>10</sup>then your barns will be filled with plenty,  
and your vats will be bursting with wine.

<sup>11</sup>My son, do not despise the LORD's  
discipline

or be weary of his reproof,

<sup>12</sup>for the LORD reproves him whom he loves,  
as a father the son in whom he delights.

Blessed Is the One Who Finds Wisdom

<sup>13</sup>Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,  
and the one who gets understanding,

<sup>14</sup>for the gain from her is better  
than gain from silver  
and her profit better than gold.

<sup>15</sup>She is more precious than jewels,  
and nothing you desire can compare  
with her.

<sup>16</sup>Long life is in her right hand;  
in her left hand are riches and honor.

<sup>17</sup>Her ways are ways of pleasantness,  
and all her paths are peace.

<sup>18</sup>She is a tree of life to those who  
lay hold of her;  
those who hold her fast  
are called blessed.

<sup>19</sup>The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;  
by understanding he established  
the heavens;

<sup>20</sup>by his knowledge the deeps broke open,  
and the clouds drop down the dew.

<sup>21</sup>My son, do not lose sight of these—  
keep sound wisdom and discretion,

<sup>22</sup>and they will be life for your soul  
and adornment for your neck.

<sup>23</sup>Then you will walk on your way securely,  
and your foot will not stumble.

<sup>24</sup>If you lie down, you will not be afraid;  
when you lie down,  
your sleep will be sweet.

## New Testament Reading: John 11:38–57

Jesus Raises Lazarus

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, deeply moved again,  
came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone  
lay against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "Take away the  
stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man,  
said to him, "Lord, by this time there will  
be an odor, for he has been dead four days."

<sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that  
if you believed you would see the glory of  
God?" <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And  
Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I  
thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew  
that you always hear me, but I said this on  
account of the people standing around, that  
they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup>When  
he had said these things, he cried out with  
a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." <sup>44</sup>The  
man who had died came out, his hands and  
feet bound with linen strips, and his face  
wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them,  
"Unbind him, and let him go."

The Plot to Kill Jesus

<sup>45</sup>Many of the Jews therefore, who had  
come with Mary and had seen what he did,  
believed in him, <sup>46</sup>but some of them went to  
the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had  
done. <sup>47</sup>So the chief priests and the Pharisees  
gathered the Council and said, "What are we  
to do? For this man performs many signs.  
<sup>48</sup>If we let him go on like this, everyone  
will believe in him, and the Romans will  
come and take away both our place and  
our nation." <sup>49</sup>But one of them, Caiaphas,  
who was high priest that year, said to them,  
"You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup>Nor do you  
understand that it is better for you that one  
man should die for the people, not that the  
whole nation should perish." <sup>51</sup>He did not say  
this of his own accord, but being high priest

that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup>and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. <sup>53</sup>So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

<sup>54</sup>Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

<sup>55</sup>Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup>They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?” <sup>57</sup>Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

## Writing

Our doctrine, faith, and confession is as follows:

1. The divine and human natures in Christ are personally united. . . . One and the same person is the Son of God and Son of Man (Luke 1:35; Romans 9:5).

2. . . . The divine and human natures are not mingled into one substance, nor is one changed into the other. Each keeps its own essential properties, which can never become the properties of the other nature.

3. The properties of the divine nature are these: to be almighty, eternal, infinite, and to be everywhere present . . . to know everything, and so on. These never become properties of the human nature.

4. The properties of the human nature are to be a bodily creature, to be flesh and

blood, to be finite and physically limited, to suffer, to die, to ascend and descend, to move from one place to another, to suffer hunger, thirst, cold, heat, and the like. These never become properties of the divine nature.

5. The two natures are united personally (i.e., in one person). . . . From this personal union . . . flows everything human that is said and believed about God, and everything divine that is said and believed about the man Christ. . . .

7. . . . Mary conceived and bore not merely a man and no more, but God’s true Son. Therefore, she also is rightly called and truly is “the mother of God.”

8. . . . It was not a mere man who suffered, died, was buried, descended to hell, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and was raised to God’s majesty and almighty power for us. . . . It was a man whose human nature has such a profound <close>, indescribable union and communion with God’s Son that it is one person with Him.

9. God’s Son truly suffered for us . . . according to the attributes of the human nature, which He received into the unity of His divine person and made His own. He did this so that He might be able to suffer and be our High Priest for our reconciliation with God. . . .

—Epitome of the Formula of Concord  
VIII 4–14

## Hymnody

Jesus has come as the mighty Redeemer.  
 See now the threatening strong one disarmed!  
 Jesus breaks down all the walls  
 of death's fortress,  
 Brings forth the pris'ners triumphant,  
 unharmed.  
 Satan, you wicked one, own now your master!  
 Jesus has come! He, the mighty Redeemer!  
 —Jesus Has Come and Brings Pleasure  
 (LSB 533:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, Your beloved Son befriended frail humans like us to make us Your own. Teach us to be like Jesus' dear friends from Bethany, that we might serve Him faithfully like Martha, learn from Him earnestly like Mary, and be ultimately raised by Him like Lazarus. Through their Lord and ours, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1036)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Small Catechism Part I

7 JUNE

## Psalmody

<sup>9</sup>How can a young man keep his | way pure?\*  
 By guarding it according | to your word.  
<sup>10</sup>With my whole heart I | seek you;\*  
 let me not wander from  
 your com- | mandments!  
<sup>11</sup>I have stored up your word | in my heart,\*  
 that I might not sin a- | gainst you.

<sup>12</sup>Blessèd are you, | O LORD;\*  
 teach me your | statutes!  
<sup>13</sup>With my lips | I declare\*  
 all the just decrees | of your mouth.  
<sup>14</sup>In the way of your testimonies | I delight\*  
 as much as in all | riches.  
<sup>15</sup>I will meditate on your | precepts\*  
 and fix my eyes | on your ways.  
<sup>16</sup>I will delight in your | statutes;\*  
 I will not for- | get your word.  
 —Psalm 119:9–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 118:22–29*

## Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 4:1–27

A Father's Wise Instruction

<sup>1</sup>Hear, O sons, a father's instruction,  
 and be attentive, that you may  
 gain insight,  
<sup>2</sup>for I give you good precepts;  
 do not forsake my teaching.  
<sup>3</sup>When I was a son with my father,  
 tender, the only one in the sight  
 of my mother,  
<sup>4</sup>he taught me and said to me,  
 "Let your heart hold fast my words;  
 keep my commandments, and live.  
<sup>5</sup>Get wisdom; get insight;  
 do not forget, and do not turn away  
 from the words of my mouth.  
<sup>6</sup>Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;  
 love her, and she will guard you.  
<sup>7</sup>The beginning of wisdom is this:  
 Get wisdom,  
 and whatever you get, get insight.  
<sup>8</sup>Prize her highly, and she will exalt you;  
 she will honor you if you embrace her.  
<sup>9</sup>She will place on your head  
 a graceful garland;  
 she will bestow on you a beautiful crown."

- <sup>10</sup>Hear, my son, and accept my words,  
that the years of your life may be many.
- <sup>11</sup>I have taught you the way of wisdom;  
I have led you in the paths  
of uprightness.
- <sup>12</sup>When you walk, your step will not be  
hampered,  
and if you run, you will not stumble.
- <sup>13</sup>Keep hold of instruction; do not let go;  
guard her, for she is your life.
- <sup>14</sup>Do not enter the path of the wicked,  
and do not walk in the way of the evil.
- <sup>15</sup>Avoid it; do not go on it;  
turn away from it and pass on.
- <sup>16</sup>For they cannot sleep unless they have  
done wrong;  
they are robbed of sleep unless they have  
made someone stumble.
- <sup>17</sup>For they eat the bread of wickedness  
and drink the wine of violence.
- <sup>18</sup>But the path of the righteous is like the light  
of dawn,  
which shines brighter and brighter  
until full day.
- <sup>19</sup>The way of the wicked is like deep darkness;  
they do not know over what  
they stumble.
- <sup>20</sup>My son, be attentive to my words;  
incline your ear to my sayings.
- <sup>21</sup>Let them not escape from your sight;  
keep them within your heart.
- <sup>22</sup>For they are life to those who find them,  
and healing to all their flesh.
- <sup>23</sup>Keep your heart with all vigilance,  
for from it flow the springs of life.
- <sup>24</sup>Put away from you crooked speech,  
and put devious talk far from you.
- <sup>25</sup>Let your eyes look directly forward,  
and your gaze be straight before you.

- <sup>26</sup>Ponder the path of your feet;  
then all your ways will be sure.
- <sup>27</sup>Do not swerve to the right or to the left;  
turn your foot away from evil.

### New Testament Reading: John 12:1–19

Mary Anoints Jesus at Bethany

<sup>1</sup>Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup>So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup>Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>“Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” <sup>6</sup>He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

The Plot to Kill Lazarus

<sup>9</sup>When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup>So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, <sup>11</sup>because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

The Triumphal Entry

<sup>12</sup>The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” <sup>14</sup>And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

<sup>15</sup>“Fear not, daughter of Zion;  
 behold, your king is coming,  
 sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

<sup>16</sup>His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. <sup>17</sup>The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. <sup>18</sup>The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. <sup>19</sup>So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”

**Writing**

For Christ’s sake, and not for the sake of our works, we obtain the forgiveness of sins through faith. . . . In the doctrine of repentance works are required, because certainly a new life is required. But here the adversaries wrongly add that by such works we merit the forgiveness of sins, or justification. . . . Good fruit must necessarily follow [repentance and forgiveness]. . . . If good fruit do not follow, the repentance is hypocritical and fake. . . . [Also,] we have need of outward signs of so great a promise. A conscience full of fear has need of much consolation. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper

are signs that continually remind, cheer, and encourage despairing minds to believe more firmly that their sins are forgiven. So the same promise is written and portrayed in good works, in order that these works may remind us to believe more firmly. Those who produce no good works do not encourage themselves to believe, but despise these promises. On the other hand, the godly embrace them and rejoice that they have the signs and testimonies of so great a promise. So they exercise themselves in these signs and testimonies.

The adversaries give the worst advice to godly consciences when they teach that the forgiveness of sins is earned by works. Conscience, in seeking forgiveness through works, cannot be confident that the work will satisfy God. It is always tormented, and continually invents other works and other acts of worship, until it completely despairs. . . . Paul in Romans 4:5 . . . proves that the promise of righteousness is not obtained because of our works. We could never affirm that we had a reconciled God, for the Law always accuses. So the promise would be in vain and uncertain. He concludes that this promise of the forgiveness of sins and of righteousness is received through faith, not because of works. . . . In [this] the greatest consolation is offered to godly consciences, and Christ’s glory is shown forth. He certainly was given to us for this purpose, namely, that through Him we might have grace, righteousness, and peace.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
 Confession V 153–55, 164

## Hymnody

From Olivet they followed  
 Mid an exultant crowd,  
 The victor palm branch waving  
 And chanting clear and loud.  
 The Lord of earth and heaven  
 Rode on in lowly state  
 Nor scorned that little children  
 Should on His bidding wait.  
 —Hosanna, Loud Hosanna  
 (LSB 443:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, grant that in the midst of our failures and weaknesses we may be restored through the passion and intercession of Your only-begotten Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L29)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Small Catechism Part II

8 JUNE

## Psalmody

- <sup>7</sup>How precious is your steadfast love, | O God!\*
- The children of mankind take refuge  
 in the shadow | of your wings.
- <sup>8</sup>They feast on the abundance | of  
 your house,\*  
 and you give them drink from the  
 river of | your delights.
- <sup>9</sup>For with you is the foun- | tain of life;\*  
 in your light do | we see light.

- <sup>10</sup>Oh, continue your steadfast love to those  
 who | know you,\*  
 and your righteousness to the up- | right  
 of heart!
- <sup>11</sup>Let not the foot of arrogance come  
 up- | on me,\*  
 nor the hand of the wicked  
 drive | me away.
- <sup>12</sup>There the evildoers lie | fallen;\*  
 they are thrust down, unable | to rise.  
 —Psalm 36:7–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 44:1–8*

## Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 5:1–23

Warning Against Adultery

- <sup>1</sup>My son, be attentive to my wisdom;  
 incline your ear to my understanding,  
<sup>2</sup>that you may keep discretion,  
 and your lips may guard knowledge.
- <sup>3</sup>For the lips of a forbidden woman  
 drip honey,  
 and her speech is smoother than oil,  
<sup>4</sup>but in the end she is bitter as wormwood,  
 sharp as a two-edged sword.
- <sup>5</sup>Her feet go down to death;  
 her steps follow the path to Sheol;  
<sup>6</sup>she does not ponder the path of life;  
 her ways wander, and she does not  
 know it.
- <sup>7</sup>And now, O sons, listen to me,  
 and do not depart from the words  
 of my mouth.
- <sup>8</sup>Keep your way far from her,  
 and do not go near the door of her house,  
<sup>9</sup>lest you give your honor to others  
 and your years to the merciless,  
<sup>10</sup>lest strangers take their fill of your strength,  
 and your labors go to the house  
 of a foreigner,

<sup>11</sup>and at the end of your life you groan,  
when your flesh and body are consumed,  
<sup>12</sup>and you say, “How I hated discipline,  
and my heart despised reproof!  
<sup>13</sup>I did not listen to the voice of my teachers  
or incline my ear to my instructors.  
<sup>14</sup>I am at the brink of utter ruin  
in the assembled congregation.”  
<sup>15</sup>Drink water from your own cistern,  
flowing water from your own well.  
<sup>16</sup>Should your springs be scattered abroad,  
streams of water in the streets?  
<sup>17</sup>Let them be for yourself alone,  
and not for strangers with you.  
<sup>18</sup>Let your fountain be blessed,  
and rejoice in the wife of your youth,  
<sup>19</sup>a lovely deer, a graceful doe.  
Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight;  
be intoxicated always in her love.  
<sup>20</sup>Why should you be intoxicated, my son,  
with a forbidden woman  
and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?  
<sup>21</sup>For a man’s ways are before the eyes  
of the Lord,  
and he ponders all his paths.  
<sup>22</sup>The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him,  
and he is held fast in the cords of his sin.  
<sup>23</sup>He dies for lack of discipline,  
and because of his great folly  
he is led astray.

*Additional Reading: Proverbs 6:1–7:27*

### **New Testament Reading: John 12:20–36a**

Some Greeks Seek Jesus

<sup>20</sup>Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.  
<sup>21</sup>So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told

Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up

<sup>27</sup>“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup>The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup>He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. <sup>34</sup>So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” <sup>35</sup>So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup>While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

## Writing

Since the mingled cup and the bread that has been made receive the Word of God, and the Eucharist becomes the blood and the body of Christ from which the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is eternal life? And this flesh is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord and is a member of Him. This is exactly what the blessed Paul declares in his Epistle to the Ephesians when he says that “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones” [Eph 5:30]. He does not say this about some spiritual and invisible person, for a spirit does not have bones or flesh [cf. Luke 24:39]. Rather, he is referring to the time when the Lord became an actual man, consisting of flesh and nerves and bones. Our flesh, then, is nourished by the cup that is His blood and receives increase from the bread that is His body. Just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground bears fruit in due season or a kernel of wheat falling into the earth and decomposing rises and is multiplied by the Spirit of God who contains all things—and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for our use when, after receiving the Word of God, it becomes the Eucharist that is the body and blood of Christ—in the same way our bodies, being nourished by it and deposited in the earth and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time. The Word of God grants them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality and to this corruptible incorruption [1 Cor 15:53]. This is so because the strength of God is made perfect in weakness [2 Cor 12:3] in order that we may

never become puffed up, as if we had life from ourselves, or become exalted against God with ungrateful minds.

—Irenaeus

## Hymnody

What these sacrifices promised  
From a God who sought to bless,  
Came at last—a second Adam—  
Priest and King of Righteousness:  
Son of God, incarnate Savior,  
Son of Man, both Christ and Lord,  
Who in naked shame would offer  
On the cross His blood outpoured.

—In the Shattered Bliss of Eden  
(*LSB* 572:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful God, Your Son, Jesus Christ, was lifted high upon the cross that He might bear the sins of the world and draw all people to Himself. Grant that we who glory in His death for our redemption may faithfully heed His call to bear the cross and follow Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F27)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Small Catechism Part III

9 JUNE

**Psalmody**

<sup>10</sup>Then I said, “I will ap- | peal to this,\*  
to the years of the right hand  
of the | Most High.”

<sup>11</sup>I will remember the deeds | of the LORD;\*  
yes, I will remember your  
won- | ders of old.

<sup>12</sup>I will ponder | all your work,\*  
and meditate on your | mighty deeds.

<sup>13</sup>Your way, O God, is | holy.\*  
What god is great | like our God?

<sup>14</sup>You are the God who works | wonders;\*  
you have made known your might  
among the | peoples.

<sup>15</sup>You with your arm redeemed  
your | people,\*  
the children of Jacob and | Joseph.  
—Psalm 77:10–15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 106*

**Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 8:1–21**

The Blessings of Wisdom

<sup>1</sup>Does not wisdom call?  
Does not understanding raise her voice?

<sup>2</sup>On the heights beside the way,  
at the crossroads she takes her stand;

<sup>3</sup>beside the gates in front of the town,  
at the entrance of the portals  
she cries aloud:

<sup>4</sup>“To you, O men, I call,  
and my cry is to the children of man.

<sup>5</sup>O simple ones, learn prudence;  
O fools, learn sense.

<sup>6</sup>Hear, for I will speak noble things,  
and from my lips will come what is right,

<sup>7</sup>for my mouth will utter truth;  
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

<sup>8</sup>All the words of my mouth are righteous;  
there is nothing twisted or crooked  
in them.

<sup>9</sup>They are all straight to him who  
understands,  
and right to those who find knowledge.

<sup>10</sup>Take my instruction instead of silver,  
and knowledge rather than choice gold,

<sup>11</sup>for wisdom is better than jewels,  
and all that you may desire cannot  
compare with her.

<sup>12</sup>“I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,  
and I find knowledge and discretion.

<sup>13</sup>The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.  
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil  
and perverted speech I hate.

<sup>14</sup>I have counsel and sound wisdom;  
I have insight; I have strength.

<sup>15</sup>By me kings reign,  
and rulers decree what is just;

<sup>16</sup>by me princes rule,  
and nobles, all who govern justly.

<sup>17</sup>I love those who love me,  
and those who seek me diligently  
find me.

<sup>18</sup>Riches and honor are with me,  
enduring wealth and righteousness.

<sup>19</sup>My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,  
and my yield than choice silver.

<sup>20</sup>I walk in the way of righteousness,  
in the paths of justice,

<sup>21</sup>granting an inheritance to those who  
love me,  
and filling their treasuries.”

**New Testament Reading: John 12:36b–50**

The Unbelief of the People

When Jesus had said these things,  
he departed and hid himself from them.

<sup>37</sup>Though he had done so many signs before

them, they still did not believe in him,<sup>38</sup> so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,  
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

<sup>39</sup>Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

<sup>40</sup>“He has blinded their eyes  
and hardened their heart,  
lest they see with their eyes,  
and understand with their heart,  
and turn,  
and I would heal them.”

<sup>41</sup>Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. <sup>42</sup>Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup>for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Jesus Came to Save the World

<sup>44</sup>And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. <sup>45</sup>And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. <sup>46</sup>I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. <sup>47</sup>If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. <sup>48</sup>The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. <sup>49</sup>For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to

speak. <sup>50</sup>And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

## Writing

“Ibrahim?” [said the Knight to his Muslim servant.] “What are you thinking about?”

“Paradise, my lord . . . and God. . . . He is one. . . . He is exalted, higher than the heavens, incomprehensible, glorious beyond all understanding, impossible to grasp. . . . If we could understand him, he would no longer be God. And if he could become like us, he would not be God either. We would never dare to say that the Infinitely Exalted would have a son with a woman, that the Glory and the Divinity, the holy, inexpressible whom we cannot find words for . . . that this one should be found in a miserable, sweaty, human body, which can get sores and colic, which must stuff itself with porridge and must relieve itself as we do. This is blasphemy. Therefore God gives us victory . . . .”

[Injured, on his deathbed, and far from home, the Knight] closed his eyes and . . . folded his hands. A great peace came over him. He knew that he was not alone. He knew this without needing to clothe it with words. There was someone here who walked amid the hospital beds, just like in the streets of Capernaum. This one stopped and bowed down. His breast, too, had a large wound. His hands bled. One could tell that he knew everything that those at home would never understand. He, too, had experienced it: cold and rain, filth and vermin, beatings and wounds, fear of death and defeat. The God

who had come down into all this, he was very near. It was good to have such a God.

—Bo Giertz

**Hymnody**

Amen, Lord Jesus, grant our prayer;  
Great Captain, now Thine arm make bare,  
Fight for us once again!

So shall Thy saints and martyrs raise  
A mighty chorus to Thy praise  
Forevermore. Amen.

—O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe  
(LSB 666:4)

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L08)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Small Catechism Part IV

**10 JUNE**

**Psalmody**

<sup>12</sup>What shall I render | to the LORD\*  
for all his bene- | fits to me?

<sup>13</sup>I will lift up the cup of sal- | vation\*  
and call on the name | of the LORD,

<sup>14</sup>I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
in the presence of all his | people.

<sup>15</sup>Precious in the sight | of the LORD\*  
is the death | of his saints.

<sup>16</sup>O LORD, I am your | servant;\*  
I am your servant,  
the son of your maidservant.  
You have | loosed my bonds.

<sup>17</sup>I will offer to you the sacrifice  
of thanks- | giving\*  
and call on the name | of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
in the presence of all his | people,

<sup>19</sup>in the courts of the house | of the LORD,\*  
in your midst, O Jerusalem. | Praise the  
LORD!

—Psalm 116:12–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 132*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Proverbs 8:22–36**

[The Blessings of Wisdom]

<sup>22</sup>“The LORD possessed me at the beginning  
of his work,  
the first of his acts of old.

<sup>23</sup>Ages ago I was set up,  
at the first, before the beginning  
of the earth.

<sup>24</sup>When there were no depths  
I was brought forth,  
when there were no springs  
abounding with water.

<sup>25</sup>Before the mountains had been shaped,  
before the hills, I was brought forth,

<sup>26</sup>before he had made the earth with its fields,  
or the first of the dust of the world.

<sup>27</sup>When he established the heavens,  
I was there;  
when he drew a circle  
on the face of the deep,

<sup>28</sup>when he made firm the skies above,  
when he established the fountains  
of the deep,

<sup>29</sup>when he assigned to the sea its limit,  
so that the waters might not transgress  
his command,

when he marked out the foundations  
of the earth,

<sup>30</sup>then I was beside him,  
like a master workman,

and I was daily his delight,  
rejoicing before him always,

<sup>31</sup>rejoicing in his inhabited world  
and delighting in the children of man.

<sup>32</sup>“And now, O sons, listen to me:  
blessed are those who keep my ways.

<sup>33</sup>Hear instruction and be wise,  
and do not neglect it.

<sup>34</sup>Blessed is the one who listens to me,  
watching daily at my gates,  
waiting beside my doors.

<sup>35</sup>For whoever finds me finds life  
and obtains favor from the LORD,

<sup>36</sup>but he who fails to find me injures himself;  
all who hate me love death.”

### **New Testament Reading: John 13:1–20**

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

<sup>1</sup>Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup>During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, <sup>4</sup>rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. <sup>5</sup>Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped

around him. <sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?”

<sup>7</sup>Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” <sup>8</sup>Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” <sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.” <sup>11</sup>For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

<sup>12</sup>When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup>You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. <sup>14</sup>If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup>For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup>If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. <sup>18</sup>I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’ <sup>19</sup>I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. <sup>20</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

**Writing**

9. God’s Son truly suffered for us. . . . He did this so that He might be able to suffer and be our High Priest for our reconciliation with God, as it is written in 1 Corinthians 2:8, They “crucified the Lord of glory.” And Acts 20:28 says, with God’s blood we have been redeemed.

10. We believe, teach, and confess that the Son of Man really is exalted. He is (in deed and truth) exalted according to His human nature to the right hand of God’s almighty majesty and power. For He was received into God when He was conceived of the Holy Spirit in His mother’s womb, and His human nature was personally united with the Son of the Highest.

11. Christ always had this majesty according to the personal union. Yet He abstained from using it in the state of His humiliation, and because of this He truly increased in all wisdom and favor with God and men. Therefore, He did not always use this majesty, but only when it pleased Him. Then, after His resurrection, He entirely laid aside the form of a servant, but not the human nature, and was established in the full use, manifestation, and declaration of the divine majesty. In this way He entered into His glory [Philippians 2:6–11]. So now not just as God, but also as man He knows all things and can do all things. He is present with all creatures, and has under His feet and in His hands everything that is in heaven and on earth and under the earth, as He Himself testifies [in Matthew 28:18], “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me” [see also John 13:3]. And St. Paul says in Ephesians 4:10, “He . . . ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.” Because He is present, He can exercise His

power everywhere. To Him everything is possible and everything is known.

—Epitome of the Formula of Concord  
VIII 14–16

**Hymnody**

Marvel how their Lord and teacher  
Gently taught them not to vie  
As He humbly knelt before them,  
Dusty feet to wash and dry,  
By His tender touch expressing  
True compassion from on high.

—Jesus, Greatest at the Table  
(LSB 446:2)

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty and everlasting God, grant us by Your grace so to pass through this holy time of our Lord’s passion that we may obtain the forgiveness of our sins; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L30)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Small Catechism Part V

**11 JUNE**

*St. Barnabas, Apostle*

**Psalmody**

<sup>12</sup> What man is there who de- | sires life\*  
and loves many days,  
that he may | see good?

<sup>13</sup> Keep your tongue from | evil\*  
and your lips from speak- | ing deceit.

- <sup>14</sup> Turn away from evil | and do good;\*  
seek peace and pur- | sue it.
- <sup>15</sup> The eyes of the LORD are toward  
the | righteous\*  
and his ears | toward their cry.
- <sup>16</sup> The face of the LORD is against those  
who do | evil,\*  
to cut off the memory  
of them | from the earth.
- <sup>17</sup> When the righteous cry for help,  
the | LORD hears\*  
and delivers them out  
of all their | troubles.
- <sup>18</sup> The LORD is near to the broken- | hearted\*  
and saves the crushed in | spirit.
- <sup>19</sup> Many are the afflictions of the | righteous,\*  
but the LORD delivers him  
out | of them all.
- <sup>20</sup> He keeps | all his bones;\*  
not one of them is | broken.
- <sup>21</sup> Affliction will slay the | wicked,\*  
and those who hate the righteous  
will | be condemned.
- <sup>22</sup> The LORD redeems the life of his | servants,\*  
none of those who take refuge in him  
will | be condemned.  
—Psalm 34:12–22

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 109*

### Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 9:1–18

The Way of Wisdom

- <sup>1</sup> Wisdom has built her house;  
she has hewn her seven pillars.
- <sup>2</sup> She has slaughtered her beasts; she has  
mixed her wine;  
she has also set her table.
- <sup>3</sup> She has sent out her young women to call  
from the highest places in the town,
- <sup>4</sup> “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”  
To him who lacks sense she says,

- <sup>5</sup> “Come, eat of my bread  
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
- <sup>6</sup> Leave your simple ways, and live,  
and walk in the way of insight.”
- <sup>7</sup> Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself  
abuse,  
and he who reproves a wicked man  
incurs injury.
- <sup>8</sup> Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you;  
reprove a wise man, and he will love you.
- <sup>9</sup> Give instruction to a wise man, and he will  
be still wiser;  
teach a righteous man, and he will  
increase in learning.
- <sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning  
of wisdom,  
and the knowledge of the Holy One is  
insight.
- <sup>11</sup> For by me your days will be multiplied,  
and years will be added to your life.
- <sup>12</sup> If you are wise, you are wise for yourself;  
if you scoff, you alone will bear it.

The Way of Folly

- <sup>13</sup> The woman Folly is loud;  
she is seductive and knows nothing.
- <sup>14</sup> She sits at the door of her house;  
she takes a seat on the highest places of  
the town,
- <sup>15</sup> calling to those who pass by,  
who are going straight on their way,
- <sup>16</sup> “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”  
And to him who lacks sense she says,
- <sup>17</sup> “Stolen water is sweet,  
and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.”
- <sup>18</sup> But he does not know that the dead  
are there,  
that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

**New Testament Reading: John 13:21–38**

## One of You Will Betray Me

<sup>21</sup>After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” <sup>22</sup>The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. <sup>23</sup>One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus, <sup>24</sup>so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. <sup>25</sup>So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” <sup>26</sup>Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. <sup>27</sup>Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” <sup>28</sup>Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. <sup>29</sup>Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor. <sup>30</sup>So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

## A New Commandment

<sup>31</sup>When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. <sup>32</sup>If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup>Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’ <sup>34</sup>A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

## Jesus Foretells Peter’s Denial

<sup>36</sup>Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.” <sup>37</sup>Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” <sup>38</sup>Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.”

**Writing**

Barnabas was a Jew, a Levite born in Cyprus, one of the first disciples of the apostles, and Paul’s traveling companion until the sixteenth year after the resurrection of Christ. He is mentioned in [Acts] 4, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 1 Corinthians 9, Galatians 2. Part of the sermons of Barnabas is recited by Clement [of Alexandria] in his *Stromateis*: “Before we believed in God, the dwelling of our heart was corruptible and fragile; truly it was a temple made by hands, when it was full of idolatry, and was a house of demons. But behold! It has been built gloriously into the temple of the Lord. How? By receiving the remission of sins and by hoping in the name of Christ, let us become new and re-created, because God truly dwells in us. How? When these dwell in us: the Word of His faith, the calling of His promise, the wisdom of justification, and the mandates of doctrine.” *Barnabas* is the same as “Son of consolation” (Acts 4), from *bar*, “son,” and *nafesh*, “re-create, revive, console,” and so on. Eusebius (bk. 1, ch. 14) writes that he was one of the seventy disciples.

—David Chytraeus

## Hymnody

For Barnabas we praise You,  
 Who kept Your law of love  
 And, leaving earthly treasures,  
 Sought riches from above.  
 O Christ, our Lord and Savior,  
 Let gifts of grace descend,  
 That Your true consolation  
 May through the world extend.  
 —By All Your Saints in Warfare  
 (LSB 518:17)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, Your faithful servant Barnabas sought not his own renown but gave generously of his life and substance for the encouragement of the apostles and their ministry. Grant that we may follow his example in lives given to charity and the proclamation of the Gospel; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F19)

## St. Barnabas, Apostle

St. Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus who sold some land and gave the proceeds to the early Christian community in Jerusalem (Acts 4:36–37). St. Paul informs us that he was a cousin of John Mark (Colossians 4:10). Barnabas was sent by the Jerusalem Church to oversee the young Church in Antioch (Acts 11:22). While there, he went to Tarsus and brought Paul back to Antioch to help him (Acts 11:25–26). It was this Church in Antioch that commissioned and sent Barnabas and Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:2–3). When it was time for the second missionary journey, however, Barnabas and Paul disagreed about taking along John Mark. Barnabas took Mark

and went to Cyprus; Paul took Silas and headed north through Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:36–41). Nothing more is known of the activities of Barnabas, except that he was apparently known to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 9:6). Tradition relates that Barnabas died a martyr's death in Cyprus by being stoned.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Small Catechism Part VI

## 12 JUNE

*The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, AD 325*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Fret not yourself because of evil- | doers;\*  
 be not envious of wrong- | doers!
- <sup>2</sup> For they will soon fade | like the grass\*  
 and wither like the | green herb.
- <sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, | and do good;\*  
 dwell in the land  
 and befriend | faithfulness.
- <sup>4</sup> Delight yourself | in the LORD,\*  
 and he will give you the desires | of  
 your heart.
- <sup>5</sup> Commit your way | to the LORD;\*  
 trust in him, and | he will act.
- <sup>6</sup> He will bring forth your righteousness | as  
 the light,\*  
 and your justice as the | noonday.
- <sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD and wait  
 patiently | for him;\*  
 fret not yourself over the one who  
 prospers in his way, over the man  
 who carries out evil de- | vices!  
 —Psalm 37:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 101*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Proverbs 10:1–23**

The Proverbs of Solomon

<sup>1</sup>The proverbs of Solomon.

A wise son makes a glad father,  
but a foolish son is a sorrow  
to his mother.

<sup>2</sup>Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit,  
but righteousness delivers from death.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD does not let the righteous  
go hungry,  
but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

<sup>4</sup>A slack hand causes poverty,  
but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

<sup>5</sup>He who gathers in summer is a prudent son,  
but he who sleeps in harvest is a son  
who brings shame.

<sup>6</sup>Blessings are on the head of the righteous,  
but the mouth of the wicked  
conceals violence.

<sup>7</sup>The memory of the righteous is a blessing,  
but the name of the wicked will rot.

<sup>8</sup>The wise of heart will receive  
commandments,  
but a babbling fool will come to ruin.

<sup>9</sup>Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,  
but he who makes his ways crooked  
will be found out.

<sup>10</sup>Whoever winks the eye causes trouble,  
but a babbling fool will come to ruin.

<sup>11</sup>The mouth of the righteous is a fountain  
of life,  
but the mouth of the wicked  
conceals violence.

<sup>12</sup>Hatred stirs up strife,  
but love covers all offenses.

<sup>13</sup>On the lips of him who has understanding,  
wisdom is found,  
but a rod is for the back of him  
who lacks sense.

<sup>14</sup>The wise lay up knowledge,  
but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near.

<sup>15</sup>A rich man's wealth is his strong city;  
the poverty of the poor is their ruin.

<sup>16</sup>The wage of the righteous leads to life,  
the gain of the wicked to sin.

<sup>17</sup>Whoever heeds instruction is on the path  
to life,  
but he who rejects reproof  
leads others astray.

<sup>18</sup>The one who conceals hatred has lying lips,  
and whoever utters slander is a fool.

<sup>19</sup>When words are many,  
transgression is not lacking,  
but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.

<sup>20</sup>The tongue of the righteous is choice silver;  
the heart of the wicked is of little worth.

<sup>21</sup>The lips of the righteous feed many,  
but fools die for lack of sense.

<sup>22</sup>The blessing of the LORD makes rich,  
and he adds no sorrow with it.

<sup>23</sup>Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool,  
but wisdom is pleasure to a man  
of understanding.

*Additional Reading: Proverbs 11:1–12:28*

**New Testament Reading: John 14:1–17**

I Am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life

<sup>1</sup>“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. <sup>4</sup>And you know the way to where I am going.” <sup>5</sup>Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one

comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup>Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” <sup>9</sup>Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup>Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. <sup>11</sup>Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

<sup>12</sup>“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup>Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

<sup>15</sup>“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup>even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

## Writing

We believe in one Unbegotten God, Father Almighty, maker of all things both visible and invisible, who has His being from Himself. And in one Only-begotten Word, Wisdom, Son, begotten of the Father

without beginning and eternally; word not pronounced nor mental, nor an effluence of the Perfect, nor a dividing of the impassible Essence, nor an issue; but an absolutely perfect Son, living and powerful, the true Image of the Father, equal in honor and glory. For this, He says, “is the will of the Father, that as they honor the Father, so they may honor the Son also”: very God of very God, as John says in his general Epistles, “And we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ: this is the true God and everlasting life”: Almighty of Almighty. For all things that the Father rules and sways, the Son rules and sways likewise: wholly from the Whole, being like the Father as the Lord says, “he that has seen Me has seen the Father.” But He was begotten ineffably and incomprehensibly, for “who shall declare His generation?” in other words, no one can. Who, when at the consummation of the ages, He had descended from the bosom of the Father, took from the undefiled Virgin Mary our humanity, Christ Jesus, whom He delivered of His own will to suffer for us, as the Lord says: “No man takes My life from Me. I have power to lay it down and have power to take it again.” In which humanity He was crucified and died for us, and rose from the dead, and was taken up into the heavens, having been created as the beginning of ways for us when on earth He showed us light from out of darkness, salvation from error, life from the dead, an entrance to paradise, from which Adam was cast out and into which he again entered by means of the thief, as the Lord said, “This day shall you be with Me in paradise,” into which Paul also once entered. [He showed us] also a way up to the heavens, where the humanity of the Lord, in which He will judge the quick

and the dead, entered as precursor for us. We believe, likewise, also in the Holy Spirit who searches all things, even the deep things of God, and we anathematise doctrines contrary to this.

—Athanasius

### Hymnody

We all believe in Jesus Christ,  
His own Son, our Lord, possessing  
An equal Godhead, throne, and might,  
Source of ev'ry grace and blessing;  
Born of Mary, virgin mother,  
By the power of the Spirit,  
Word made flesh, our elder brother;  
That the lost might life inherit,  
Was crucified for all our sin  
And raised by God to life again.

—We All Believe in One True God  
(LSB 954:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God heavenly Father, at the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea, Your Church boldly confessed that it believed in one Lord Jesus Christ as being of one substance with the Father. Grant us courage to confess this saving faith with Your Church through all the ages; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1037)

### The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, AD 325

The first Council of Nicaea was convened in the early summer of AD 325 by Roman Emperor Constantine at what is today Iznik, Turkey. The emperor presided at the opening of the council. The council ruled against the Arians, who taught that Jesus was not the eternal Son of God but was created by the

Father and was called Son of God because of His righteousness. The chief opponents of the Arians were Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and his deacon, Athanasius. The council confessed the eternal divinity of Jesus and adopted the earliest version of the Nicene Creed, which in its entirety was adopted at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Small Catechism Morning and Evening Blessing & Blessing and Thanksgiving at Meals

## 13 JUNE

### Psalmody

<sup>32</sup> O kingdoms of the earth, | sing to God,\*  
sing praises | to the Lord,

<sup>33</sup> to him who rides in the heavens,  
the ancient | heavens;\*  
behold, he sends out his voice,  
his | mighty voice.

<sup>34</sup> Ascribe | power to God,\*  
whose majesty is over Israel,  
and whose power is | in the skies.

<sup>35</sup> Awesome is God from his sanctu- | ary;\*  
the God of Israel—he is the one who  
gives power and strength to his people.  
Blessèd | be God!

—Psalm 68:32–35

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 85*

## Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 13:1–25

[The Proverbs of Solomon]

<sup>1</sup>A wise son hears his father's instruction,  
but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

<sup>2</sup>From the fruit of his mouth a man eats  
what is good,  
but the desire of the treacherous is for  
violence.

<sup>3</sup>Whoever guards his mouth preserves  
his life;  
he who opens wide his lips comes  
to ruin.

<sup>4</sup>The soul of the sluggard craves and gets  
nothing,  
while the soul of the diligent is richly  
supplied.

<sup>5</sup>The righteous hates falsehood,  
but the wicked brings shame  
and disgrace.

<sup>6</sup>Righteousness guards him whose way  
is blameless,  
but sin overthrows the wicked.

<sup>7</sup>One pretends to be rich, yet has nothing;  
another pretends to be poor,  
yet has great wealth.

<sup>8</sup>The ransom of a man's life is his wealth,  
but a poor man hears no threat.

<sup>9</sup>The light of the righteous rejoices,  
but the lamp of the wicked will be put  
out.

<sup>10</sup>By insolence comes nothing but strife,  
but with those who take advice  
is wisdom.

<sup>11</sup>Wealth gained hastily will dwindle,  
but whoever gathers little by little will  
increase it.

<sup>12</sup>Hope deferred makes the heart sick,  
but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

<sup>13</sup>Whoever despises the word brings  
destruction on himself,

but he who reveres the commandment  
will be rewarded.

<sup>14</sup>The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,  
that one may turn away from the snares  
of death.

<sup>15</sup>Good sense wins favor,  
but the way of the treacherous  
is their ruin.

<sup>16</sup>In everything the prudent acts  
with knowledge,  
but a fool flaunts his folly.

<sup>17</sup>A wicked messenger falls into trouble,  
but a faithful envoy brings healing.

<sup>18</sup>Poverty and disgrace come to him who  
ignores instruction,  
but whoever heeds reproof is honored.

<sup>19</sup>A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul,  
but to turn away from evil is an  
abomination to fools.

<sup>20</sup>Whoever walks with the wise becomes  
wise,  
but the companion of fools will  
suffer harm.

<sup>21</sup>Disaster pursues sinners,  
but the righteous are rewarded  
with good.

<sup>22</sup>A good man leaves an inheritance to his  
children's children,  
but the sinner's wealth is laid up  
for the righteous.

<sup>23</sup>The fallow ground of the poor  
would yield much food,  
but it is swept away through injustice.

<sup>24</sup>Whoever spares the rod hates his son,  
but he who loves him is diligent  
to discipline him.

<sup>25</sup>The righteous has enough to satisfy  
his appetite,  
but the belly of the wicked suffers want.

**New Testament Reading: John 14:18–31**

<sup>18</sup>“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup>Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup>In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup>Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” <sup>22</sup>Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup>Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.

<sup>25</sup>“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup>But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. <sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. <sup>28</sup>You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup>And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. <sup>30</sup>I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, <sup>31</sup>but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.”

**Writing**

I believe that there is upon earth a little holy group and congregation of pure saints, under one head, even Christ [Ephesians 1:22]. This group is called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, one mind, and understanding, with many different gifts, yet agreeing in love, without sects or schisms [Ephesians 4:5–8, 11]. I am also a part and member of this same group, a sharer and joint owner of all the goods it possesses [Romans 8:17]. I am brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Spirit through having heard and continuing to hear God’s Word [Galatians 3:1–2], which is the beginning of entering it. In the past, before we had attained to this, we were altogether of the devil, knowing nothing about God and about Christ [Romans 3:10–12]. So, until the Last Day, the Holy Spirit abides with the holy congregation or Christendom [John 14:17]. Through this congregation He brings us to Christ and He teaches and preaches to us the Word [John 14:26]. By the Word He works and promotes sanctification, causing this congregation daily to grow and to become strong in the faith and its fruit, which He produces [Galatians 5].

—Large Catechism II 51–53

Our churches teach that at the end of the world Christ will appear for judgment and will raise all the dead [1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:2]. He will give the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, but He will condemn ungodly people and the devils to be tormented without end [Matthew 25:31–46].

Our churches condemn the Anabaptists, who think that there will be an end to the punishments of condemned men and devils.

Our churches also condemn those who are spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.

—Augsburg Confession XVII 1–5

### Hymnody

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

—Built on the Rock (*LSB* 645:5)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L46)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Small Catechism Table of Duties:  
For Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers through  
Concerning Civil Government ›What  
Subjects Owe to the Rulers›

## 14 JUNE

*Elisha*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Shout for joy to God, | all the earth;\*

<sup>2</sup> sing the glory of his name;  
give to him | glorious praise!

<sup>3</sup> Say to God, “How awesome | are  
your deeds!\*

So great is your power that your enemies  
come cringing | to you.

<sup>4</sup> All the earth worships you  
and sings prais- | es to you;\*  
they sing praises | to your name.”

<sup>5</sup> Come and see what | God has done:\*

he is awesome in his deeds toward  
the chil- | dren of man.

<sup>6</sup> He turned the sea into | dry land;\*

they passed through the riv- | er on foot.

There did we rejoice in him, <sup>7</sup> who rules  
by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch  
on the | nations—\*

let not the rebellious ex- | alt themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Bless our God, O | peoples;\*

let the sound of his | praise be heard,

—Psalm 66:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 66*

### Old Testament Reading:

#### Proverbs 14:1–27

[The Proverbs of Solomon]

<sup>1</sup>The wisest of women builds her house,  
but folly with her own hands tears it  
down.

<sup>2</sup>Whoever walks in uprightness fears  
the LORD,  
but he who is devious in his ways  
despises him.

<sup>3</sup>By the mouth of a fool comes a rod  
for his back,  
but the lips of the wise will preserve them.

<sup>4</sup>Where there are no oxen,  
the manger is clean,  
but abundant crops come by the strength  
of the ox.

<sup>5</sup>A faithful witness does not lie,  
but a false witness breathes out lies.

<sup>6</sup>A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain,  
but knowledge is easy for a man  
of understanding.

<sup>7</sup>Leave the presence of a fool,  
for there you do not meet words  
of knowledge.

<sup>8</sup>The wisdom of the prudent is to discern  
his way,  
but the folly of fools is deceiving.

<sup>9</sup>Fools mock at the guilt offering,  
but the upright enjoy acceptance.

<sup>10</sup>The heart knows its own bitterness,  
and no stranger shares its joy.

<sup>11</sup>The house of the wicked will be destroyed,  
but the tent of the upright will flourish.

<sup>12</sup>There is a way that seems right to a man,  
but its end is the way to death.

<sup>13</sup>Even in laughter the heart may ache,  
and the end of joy may be grief.

<sup>14</sup>The backslider in heart will be filled with  
the fruit of his ways,  
and a good man will be filled  
with the fruit of his ways.

<sup>15</sup>The simple believes everything,  
but the prudent gives thought  
to his steps.

<sup>16</sup>One who is wise is cautious and turns away  
from evil,  
but a fool is reckless and careless.

<sup>17</sup>A man of quick temper acts foolishly,  
and a man of evil devices is hated.

<sup>18</sup>The simple inherit folly,  
but the prudent are crowned with  
knowledge.

<sup>19</sup>The evil bow down before the good,  
the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

<sup>20</sup>The poor is disliked even by his neighbor,  
but the rich has many friends.

<sup>21</sup>Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner,  
but blessed is he who is generous to the  
poor.

<sup>22</sup>Do they not go astray who devise evil?  
Those who devise good meet steadfast  
love and faithfulness.

<sup>23</sup>In all toil there is profit,  
but mere talk tends only to poverty.

<sup>24</sup>The crown of the wise is their wealth,  
but the folly of fools brings folly.

<sup>25</sup>A truthful witness saves lives,  
but one who breathes out lies is deceitful.

<sup>26</sup>In the fear of the LORD one has strong  
confidence,  
and his children will have a refuge.

<sup>27</sup>The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,  
that one may turn away from the snares  
of death.

### **New Testament Reading: John 15:1–11**

I Am the True Vine

<sup>1</sup>“I am the true vine, and my Father is  
the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in me that  
does not bear fruit he takes away, and every  
branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that  
it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>Already you are  
clean because of the word that I have spoken  
to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the  
branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it  
abides in the vine, neither can you, unless  
you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the  
branches. Whoever abides in me and I in  
him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart

from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

### Writing

Elisha was a prophet who governed the Church, promoted the study of doctrine, and gave many political counsels to the kings of Israel. He governed among the people of God for more than eighty years. . . . He came from the town of Abel-meholah, and was called from the plow to the prophetic office (1 Kings 19). He was a faithful and diligent disciple and successor of the prophet Elijah. When Elijah was about to ascend into heaven, Elisha asked for a double portion of his spirit, or the gifts necessary for managing Church and school among the people of God with a great and cheerful mind (2 Kings 2). . . . He brought aid to a widow and poor orphan vexed by creditors with a never-ending flask of oil (2 Kings 4), and he raised the son of the Shunammite (2 Kings 4). He made the bitter waters healthy by sprinkling salt in Jericho (2 Kings 2); by this image, he at the same time showed that the roots of doctrine and virtue are bitter, but when God blesses and the salt of wisdom seasons, the fruits are most sweet. He provided for one hundred

scholars in Gilgal at the time of famine, with the meager provisions of herbs of the field and wild gourds, whose bitterness he took away by pouring in the flour of the Word and divine promises (2 Kings 4). He cleansed Naaman the Syrian from his leprosy and punished his greedy and lying servant Gehazi with the same misfortune (2 Kings 5). He made the iron of the ax that fell into the Jordan river to float on the surface of the water (2 Kings 6). . . . Finally, in sickness he prophesied concerning the victories of Joash, king of Israel, and he died (2 Kings 13). When the body of a traveller who was killed by robbers was cast into Elisha's grave, the traveller came back to life (Sirach 48).

—David Chytraeus

### Hymnody

Chief of sinners though I be,  
Jesus shed His blood for me,  
Died that I might live on high,  
Lives that I might never die.  
As the branch is to the vine,  
I am His, and He is mine.

—Chief of Sinners Though I Be  
(*LSB* 611:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, through the prophet Elisha, You continued the prophetic pattern of teaching Your people the true faith and demonstrating through miracles Your presence in the creation to heal it of its brokenness. Grant that Your Church may see in Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the final end-times prophet whose teaching and miracles continue in Your Church through the healing medicine of the Gospel and the Sacraments; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1038)

## Elisha

Elisha, son of Shaphat of the tribe of Issachar, was the prophet of God to the northern kingdom of Israel around 849–786 BC. Upon seeing his mentor, Elijah, taken up into heaven, Elisha assumed the prophetic office and took up the mantle of his predecessor. Like Elijah, Elisha played an active role in political affairs. He also performed many miracles, such as curing the Syrian army commander Naaman of his leprosy (2 Kings 5) and restoring life to the son of a Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:8–37). A vocal opponent of Baal worship, Elisha lived up to his name, which means “my God is salvation.”

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Small Catechism Table of Duties:  
For Husbands through For All in Common

15 JUNE

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;\*  
according to your abundant mercy blot out my trans- | gressions.
- <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my in- | iquity,\*  
and cleanse me | from my sin!
- <sup>3</sup> For I know my trans- | gressions,\*  
and my sin is ever be- | fore me.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in in- | iquity,\*

and in sin did my mother  
con- | ceive me.

- <sup>6</sup> Behold, you delight in truth  
in the inward | being,\*  
and you teach me wisdom  
in the | secret heart.
- <sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop,  
and I | shall be clean;\*  
wash me, and I shall be whit- | er  
than snow.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and | gladness;\*  
let the bones that you  
have bro- | ken rejoice.
- <sup>9</sup> Hide your face | from my sins,\*  
and blot out all my in- | iquities.
- <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, | O God,\*  
and renew a right spirit with- | in me.
- <sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from your | presence,\*  
and take not your Holy Spirit | from me.
- <sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your sal- | vation,\*  
and uphold me with a willing | spirit.  
—Psalm 51:1–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 10*

### Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 15:1–29

[The Proverbs of Solomon]

- <sup>1</sup> A soft answer turns away wrath,  
but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- <sup>2</sup> The tongue of the wise commends  
knowledge,  
but the mouths of fools pour out folly.
- <sup>3</sup> The eyes of the LORD are in every place,  
keeping watch on the evil and the good.
- <sup>4</sup> A gentle tongue is a tree of life,  
but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.
- <sup>5</sup> A fool despises his father’s instruction,  
but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.
- <sup>6</sup> In the house of the righteous  
there is much treasure,

but trouble befalls the income  
of the wicked.

<sup>7</sup>The lips of the wise spread knowledge;  
not so the hearts of fools.

<sup>8</sup>The sacrifice of the wicked is an  
abomination to the LORD,  
but the prayer of the upright is  
acceptable to him.

<sup>9</sup>The way of the wicked is an abomination  
to the LORD,  
but he loves him who  
pursues righteousness.

<sup>10</sup>There is severe discipline for him who  
forsakes the way;  
whoever hates reproof will die.

<sup>11</sup>Sheol and Abaddon lie open before  
the LORD;  
how much more the hearts  
of the children of man!

<sup>12</sup>A scoffer does not like to be reproved;  
he will not go to the wise.

<sup>13</sup>A glad heart makes a cheerful face,  
but by sorrow of heart the spirit  
is crushed.

<sup>14</sup>The heart of him who has understanding  
seeks knowledge,  
but the mouths of fools feed on folly.

<sup>15</sup>All the days of the afflicted are evil,  
but the cheerful of heart  
has a continual feast.

<sup>16</sup>Better is a little with the fear of the LORD  
than great treasure and trouble with it.

<sup>17</sup>Better is a dinner of herbs where love is  
than a fattened ox and hatred with it.

<sup>18</sup>A hot-tempered man stirs up strife,  
but he who is slow to anger  
quiets contention.

<sup>19</sup>The way of a sluggard is like a hedge  
of thorns,  
but the path of the upright  
is a level highway.

<sup>20</sup>A wise son makes a glad father,  
but a foolish man despises his mother.

<sup>21</sup>Folly is a joy to him who lacks sense,  
but a man of understanding walks  
straight ahead.

<sup>22</sup>Without counsel plans fail,  
but with many advisers they succeed.

<sup>23</sup>To make an apt answer is a joy to a man,  
and a word in season, how good it is!

<sup>24</sup>The path of life leads upward  
for the prudent,  
that he may turn away  
from Sheol beneath.

<sup>25</sup>The LORD tears down the house  
of the proud  
but maintains the widow's boundaries.

<sup>26</sup>The thoughts of the wicked are an  
abomination to the LORD,  
but gracious words are pure.

<sup>27</sup>Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles  
his own household,  
but he who hates bribes will live.

<sup>28</sup>The heart of the righteous ponders how  
to answer,  
but the mouth of the wicked  
pours out evil things.

<sup>29</sup>The LORD is far from the wicked,  
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

### New Testament Reading: John 15:12–27

<sup>12</sup>“This is my commandment, that  
you love one another as I have loved you.  
<sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, that  
someone lay down his life for his friends.  
<sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I  
command you. <sup>15</sup>No longer do I call you  
servants, for the servant does not know  
what his master is doing; but I have called  
you friends, for all that I have heard from  
my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup>You  
did not choose me, but I chose you and

appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup>These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

The Hatred of the World

<sup>18</sup>“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup>If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup>Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. <sup>21</sup>But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. <sup>22</sup>If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup>Whoever hates me hates my Father also. <sup>24</sup>If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup>But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’

<sup>26</sup>“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. <sup>27</sup>And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.”

**Writing**

The Sundays during the Pentecost cycle develop three great themes. The first is Baptism and its graces. We are baptized and grounded in the graces of Baptism. Every

Sunday is a reminder of Baptism and a small Easter. The second theme is preparation for the second advent of the Lord. It is treated in detail on the final Sundays of the season. The remaining theme, the burden of the Sundays midway after Pentecost, may be summarized as the conflict between the two camps. Although we are placed in the kingdom of God, we remain surrounded by the kingdom of the world. Our souls are laboring under Adam’s wretched legacy and waver continually to and fro between two allegiances.

By these three great themes the liturgy covers the whole range of Christian life. In Baptism the precious treasure of the Spirit was conferred. Through it we are God’s children and may call God Father. Through it we have become temples of the Holy Spirit, heirs and brothers of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Baptism has not translated us to a paradise without toil or trouble. Rather, we are sent out into a troubled world to work and struggle. We must guard the holy land of our souls against hostile attack. We must learn to know and conquer the enemy, and such is the task that will continue until we have taken our final breaths.

The Church serves as both the heroine, who teaches us the art of warfare, and our strong fortress and shield in the conflict. Through Holy Communion, she bestows aid that repeatedly frees the soul from the entanglements of temptation. How does she do this? Courage and strength and perseverance flow from the Word of God in the Service of the Word, and they flow in even fuller measure from Holy Communion. Of ourselves we are helpless creatures, wholly unable to withstand the attack, but in Holy Communion another battles for us. The

Mightier, Christ, vanquishes the mighty. By means of Holy Communion, we are enrolled in our Captain's forces. And thus Christ's battle becomes our battle and His triumph our triumph, and His wondrous strength renders us invincible.

—Pius Parsch

### Hymnody

The world against me rages,  
Its fury I disdain;  
Though bitter war it wages,  
Its work is all in vain.  
My heart from care is free,  
No trouble troubles me.  
Misfortune now is play,  
And night is bright as day.

—Awake, My Heart, with Gladness  
(LSB 467:5)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L46)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession Preface 1–11

## 16 JUNE

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises | to our God;\*  
for it is pleasant, and a song  
of praise is | fitting.
- <sup>2</sup> The LORD builds up Je- | rusalem;\*  
he gathers the outcasts of | Israel.
- <sup>3</sup> He heals the broken- | hearted\*  
and binds | up their wounds.
- <sup>4</sup> He determines the number | of the stars;\*  
he gives to all of | them their names.
- <sup>5</sup> Great is our Lord, and  
abun- | dant in power;\*  
his understanding is beyond | measure.
- <sup>6</sup> The LORD lifts up the | humble;\*  
he casts the wicked | to the ground.
- <sup>7</sup> Sing to the LORD with thanks- | giving;\*  
make melody to our God | on the lyre!
- <sup>8</sup> He covers the heavens with clouds;  
he prepares rain | for the earth;\*  
he makes grass grow | on the hills.
- <sup>9</sup> He gives to the | beasts their food,\*  
and to the young ravens | that cry.
- <sup>10</sup> His delight is not in the  
strength | of the horse,\*  
nor his pleasure in the legs | of a man,  
<sup>11</sup> but the LORD takes pleasure  
in those who | fear him,\*  
in those who hope in his | steadfast love.  
—Psalm 147:1–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 147*

### Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 16:1–24

[The Proverbs of Solomon]

- <sup>1</sup> The plans of the heart belong to man,  
but the answer of the tongue  
is from the LORD.

- <sup>2</sup>All the ways of a man are pure  
in his own eyes,  
but the LORD weighs the spirit.
- <sup>3</sup>Commit your work to the LORD,  
and your plans will be established.
- <sup>4</sup>The LORD has made everything  
for its purpose,  
even the wicked for the day of trouble.
- <sup>5</sup>Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an  
abomination to the LORD;  
be assured, he will not go unpunished.
- <sup>6</sup>By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity  
is atoned for,  
and by the fear of the LORD one turns  
away from evil.
- <sup>7</sup>When a man's ways please the LORD,  
he makes even his enemies to be  
at peace with him.
- <sup>8</sup>Better is a little with righteousness  
than great revenues with injustice.
- <sup>9</sup>The heart of man plans his way,  
but the LORD establishes his steps.
- <sup>10</sup>An oracle is on the lips of a king;  
his mouth does not sin in judgment.
- <sup>11</sup>A just balance and scales are the LORD's;  
all the weights in the bag are his work.
- <sup>12</sup>It is an abomination to kings to do evil,  
for the throne is established by  
righteousness.
- <sup>13</sup>Righteous lips are the delight of a king,  
and he loves him who speaks  
what is right.
- <sup>14</sup>A king's wrath is a messenger of death,  
and a wise man will appease it.
- <sup>15</sup>In the light of a king's face there is life,  
and his favor is like the clouds that bring  
the spring rain.
- <sup>16</sup>How much better to get wisdom than gold!  
To get understanding is to be chosen  
rather than silver.

- <sup>17</sup>The highway of the upright turns aside  
from evil;  
whoever guards his way preserves his life.
- <sup>18</sup>Pride goes before destruction,  
and a haughty spirit before a fall.
- <sup>19</sup>It is better to be of a lowly spirit  
with the poor  
than to divide the spoil with the proud.
- <sup>20</sup>Whoever gives thought to the word will  
discover good,  
and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.
- <sup>21</sup>The wise of heart is called discerning,  
and sweetness of speech increases  
persuasiveness.
- <sup>22</sup>Good sense is a fountain of life to him who  
has it,  
but the instruction of fools is folly.
- <sup>23</sup>The heart of the wise makes his speech  
judicious  
and adds persuasiveness to his lips.
- <sup>24</sup>Gracious words are like a honeycomb,  
sweetness to the soul and health  
to the body.

### New Testament Reading: John 16:1–16

<sup>1</sup>“I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. <sup>2</sup>They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. <sup>3</sup>And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. <sup>4</sup>But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. <sup>5</sup>But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ <sup>6</sup>But because I have said these things to you,

sorrow has filled your heart. <sup>7</sup>Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup>And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup>concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup>concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; <sup>11</sup>concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

<sup>12</sup>“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup>When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup>All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Your Sorrow Will Turn into Joy

<sup>16</sup>“A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.”

## Writing

Now Christ did not go to the Father for His own sake or for His own Person. For this would not have helped us and could not be called our righteousness. But just as He came down from heaven for our sakes and became our flesh and blood, so He also ascended into heaven for our sakes after conquering sin, death, and hell and entering into His dominion, by which He redeems us from all this and gives us forgiveness of sin, power, and victory over the devil and death . . . .

Faith must lay hold of this, must be founded on it, and must take comfort from it in times of temptation, when the devil and man’s own conscience argue with him as follows: “Listen. What kind of Christian are you? Where is your righteousness? Do you not see and feel that you are a sinner? How, then will you pass muster before God?” Here again he must base his words on this verse and say: “I know very well, and I am sorry to say, that I am a sinner and that in me there is no righteousness that will be valid before God. And I must and will not look for or know of such righteousness in myself, for with it I could never come before God. But in this verse I hear Christ say that my righteousness consists in His going to the Father and in His ascension into heaven. There my righteousness has been deposited, and there the devil will surely have to let it remain; for he will not make Christ a sinner or reprove or find fault with His righteousness. If I am a sinner and my life does not pass muster before God, and if I find no righteousness in myself, I have another treasure, which is the righteousness of which I boast and on which I rely. This is Christ’s going to the Father, which He has presented to me as a gift.”

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Come, holy Light, guide divine,  
Now cause the Word of life to shine.  
Teach us to know our God aright  
And call Him Father with delight.  
From ev'ry error keep us free;  
Let none but Christ our master be  
That we in living faith abide,  
In Him, our Lord, with all our might confide.  
Alleluia, alleluia!

—Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord  
(LSB 497:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L45)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession Preface 12–24

17 JUNE

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD,  
for | he is good,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!
- <sup>2</sup> Let the redeemed of the LORD | say so,\*  
whom he has redeemed from | trouble
- <sup>3</sup> and gathered in | from the lands,\*

from the east and from the west, from  
the north and | from the south.

<sup>4</sup> Some wandered in | desert wastes,\*  
finding no way to a city to | dwell in;

<sup>5</sup> hungry and | thirsty,\*  
their soul fainted with- | in them.

<sup>6</sup> Then they cried to the LORD  
in their | trouble,\*  
and he delivered them from | their  
distress.

<sup>7</sup> He led them by a | straight way\*  
till they reached a city to | dwell in.

<sup>8</sup> Let them thank the LORD  
for his | steadfast love,\*  
for his wondrous works to  
the chil- | dren of men!

<sup>9</sup> For he satisfies the | longing soul,\*  
and the hungry soul he fills | with  
good things.

—Psalm 107:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 107*

## Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 17:1–28

[The Proverbs of Solomon]

<sup>1</sup> Better is a dry morsel with quiet  
than a house full of feasting with strife.

<sup>2</sup> A servant who deals wisely will rule over  
a son who acts shamefully  
and will share the inheritance as one  
of the brothers.

<sup>3</sup> The crucible is for silver, and the furnace  
is for gold,  
and the LORD tests hearts.

<sup>4</sup> An evildoer listens to wicked lips,  
and a liar gives ear to a mischievous  
tongue.

<sup>5</sup> Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker;  
he who is glad at calamity  
will not go unpunished.

<sup>6</sup>Grandchildren are the crown of the aged,  
and the glory of children is their fathers.

<sup>7</sup>Fine speech is not becoming to a fool;  
still less is false speech to a prince.

<sup>8</sup>A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes  
of the one who gives it;  
wherever he turns he prospers.

<sup>9</sup>Whoever covers an offense seeks love,  
but he who repeats a matter separates  
close friends.

<sup>10</sup>A rebuke goes deeper into a man  
of understanding  
than a hundred blows into a fool.

<sup>11</sup>An evil man seeks only rebellion,  
and a cruel messenger will be sent  
against him.

<sup>12</sup>Let a man meet a she-bear robbed  
of her cubs  
rather than a fool in his folly.

<sup>13</sup>If anyone returns evil for good,  
evil will not depart from his house.

<sup>14</sup>The beginning of strife is like letting  
out water,  
so quit before the quarrel breaks out.

<sup>15</sup>He who justifies the wicked and he who  
condemns the righteous  
are both alike an abomination  
to the LORD.

<sup>16</sup>Why should a fool have money in his hand  
to buy wisdom  
when he has no sense?

<sup>17</sup>A friend loves at all times,  
and a brother is born for adversity.

<sup>18</sup>One who lacks sense gives a pledge  
and puts up security in the presence  
of his neighbor.

<sup>19</sup>Whoever loves transgression loves strife;  
he who makes his door high  
seeks destruction.

<sup>20</sup>A man of crooked heart does not discover  
good,  
and one with a dishonest tongue  
falls into calamity.

<sup>21</sup>He who sires a fool gets himself sorrow,  
and the father of a fool has no joy.

<sup>22</sup>A joyful heart is good medicine,  
but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

<sup>23</sup>The wicked accepts a bribe in secret  
to pervert the ways of justice.

<sup>24</sup>The discerning sets his face toward wisdom,  
but the eyes of a fool are on the ends  
of the earth.

<sup>25</sup>A foolish son is a grief to his father  
and bitterness to her who bore him.

<sup>26</sup>To impose a fine on a righteous man  
is not good,  
nor to strike the noble  
for their uprightness.

<sup>27</sup>Whoever restrains his words  
has knowledge,  
and he who has a cool spirit is a man  
of understanding.

<sup>28</sup>Even a fool who keeps silent  
is considered wise;  
when he closes his lips,  
he is deemed intelligent.

*Additional Reading: Proverbs 18:1–20:4*

### **New Testament Reading: John 16:17–33**

[Your Sorrow Will Turn into Joy]

<sup>17</sup>So some of his disciples said to one another, “What is this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father?’” <sup>18</sup>So they were saying, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he is talking about.” <sup>19</sup>Jesus knew that they wanted to ask

him, so he said to them, “Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me’?”

<sup>20</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. <sup>21</sup>When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. <sup>22</sup>So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. <sup>23</sup>In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. <sup>24</sup>Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

I Have Overcome the World

<sup>25</sup>“I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. <sup>26</sup>In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; <sup>27</sup>for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. <sup>28</sup>I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

<sup>29</sup>His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! <sup>30</sup>Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.” <sup>31</sup>Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? <sup>32</sup>Behold, the hour is

coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. <sup>33</sup>I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

## Writing

Therefore, we will show that the adversaries truly make the saints not just intercessors, but atonement makers, that is, mediators of redemption. Here we will not describe the abuses of the common people. We are still speaking about the opinions of the doctors. Regarding the rest, even the inexperienced can judge.

In a person who makes atonement, two things are required. First, there should be a Word of God from which we certainly know that God wants to pity, and listen to, those calling upon Him through this atonement maker. There is such a promise about Christ, “Whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you” (John 16:23). There is no such promise about the saints. Therefore, consciences cannot be completely confident that we are heard by the invocation of saints. This invocation, therefore, does not spring from faith. We also have the command to call upon Christ:

“Come to Me, all who labor.  
(Matthew 11:28)

In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of Him shall the nations inquire. (Isaiah 11:10)

The people of Tyre will seek Your favor with gifts, the richest of the people. (Psalm 45:12)

May all kings fall down before Him.  
(Psalm 72:11)

May prayer be made for Him  
continually. (Psalm 72:15)

That all may honor the Son, just as  
they honor the Father. (John 5:23)

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ  
Himself, and God our Father . . .  
comfort your hearts and establish  
them. (2 Thessalonians 2:16–17)

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession XXI 16–18

### Hymnody

Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly  
life,

Our balm in sorrow and our stay in strife;  
Then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict  
cease,

Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace.

—Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We  
Raise (*LSB* 917:4)

### Prayer of the Day

O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted  
in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not  
without consolation but send us the Spirit of  
truth whom You promised from the Father;  
for You live and reign with Him and the Holy  
Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L48)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession I–II

## 18 JUNE

### Psalmody

<sup>9</sup> All the nations you have made shall come  
and worship before you, | O Lord,\*  
and shall glori- | fy your name.

<sup>10</sup> For you are great and do | wondrous  
things;\*  
you a- | lone are God.

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O LORD,  
that I may walk | in your truth;\*  
unite my heart to | fear your name.

<sup>12</sup> I give thanks to you, O Lord my God,  
with | my whole heart,\*  
and I will glorify your name for- | ever.

<sup>13</sup> For great is your steadfast | love toward me;\*  
you have delivered my soul from the  
depths | of Sheol.

<sup>14</sup> O God, insolent men have risen up against  
me; a band of ruthless men | seek my life,\*  
and they do not set you be- | fore them.

<sup>15</sup> But you, O Lord, are a God merciful  
and | gracious,\*  
slow to anger and abounding  
in steadfast love and | faithfulness.

<sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me;\*  
give your strength to your servant, and  
save the son of your maid- | servant.

<sup>17</sup> Show me a sign of your | favor,\*  
that those who hate me may see and be  
put to shame because you, LORD, have  
helped me and com- | forted me.

—Psalm 86:9–17

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 86*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Proverbs 20:5–25**

[The Proverbs of Solomon]

- <sup>5</sup>The purpose in a man's heart  
is like deep water,  
but a man of understanding  
will draw it out.
- <sup>6</sup>Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love,  
but a faithful man who can find?
- <sup>7</sup>The righteous who walks in his integrity—  
blessed are his children after him!
- <sup>8</sup>A king who sits on the throne of judgment  
winnows all evil with his eyes.
- <sup>9</sup>Who can say, "I have made my heart pure;  
I am clean from my sin"?
- <sup>10</sup>Unequal weights and unequal measures  
are both alike an abomination  
to the LORD.
- <sup>11</sup>Even a child makes himself known  
by his acts,  
by whether his conduct is pure  
and upright.
- <sup>12</sup>The hearing ear and the seeing eye,  
the LORD has made them both.
- <sup>13</sup>Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty;  
open your eyes, and you will have plenty  
of bread.
- <sup>14</sup>"Bad, bad," says the buyer,  
but when he goes away, then he boasts.
- <sup>15</sup>There is gold and abundance of costly stones,  
but the lips of knowledge  
are a precious jewel.
- <sup>16</sup>Take a man's garment when he has put up  
security for a stranger,  
and hold it in pledge when he puts up  
security for foreigners.
- <sup>17</sup>Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man,  
but afterward his mouth  
will be full of gravel.

- <sup>18</sup>Plans are established by counsel;  
by wise guidance wage war.
- <sup>19</sup>Whoever goes about slandering  
reveals secrets;  
therefore do not associate  
with a simple babblers.
- <sup>20</sup>If one curses his father or his mother,  
his lamp will be put out  
in utter darkness.
- <sup>21</sup>An inheritance gained hastily  
in the beginning  
will not be blessed in the end.
- <sup>22</sup>Do not say, "I will repay evil";  
wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.
- <sup>23</sup>Unequal weights are an abomination  
to the LORD,  
and false scales are not good.
- <sup>24</sup>A man's steps are from the LORD;  
how then can man understand his way?
- <sup>25</sup>It is a snare to say rashly, "It is holy,"  
and to reflect only after making vows.

*Additional Reading: Proverbs 21:1–31*

**New Testament Reading: John 17:1–26**

The High Priestly Prayer

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus had spoken these words, he  
lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father,  
the hour has come; glorify your Son that the  
Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup>since you have given  
him authority over all flesh, to give eternal  
life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup>And  
this is eternal life, that they know you the  
only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you  
have sent. <sup>4</sup>I glorified you on earth, having  
accomplished the work that you gave me to  
do. <sup>5</sup>And now, Father, glorify me in your own  
presence with the glory that I had with you  
before the world existed.

<sup>6</sup>“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. <sup>8</sup>For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup>I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup>All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup>And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. <sup>12</sup>While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup>But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup>I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup>I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

<sup>20</sup>“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup>that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that

they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup>The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. <sup>24</sup>Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup>O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup>I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

## Writing

The Emperor Justinian himself declares, “*Oportet maiestatem imperatoriam non solum armis decoratam, sed etiam legibus armatam esse.*” “Imperial majesty,” he says, “must not only be adorned with arms, but also armed with laws.” See how marvelously this emperor turns his words about. He calls the laws his armor and weapons, and he calls arms his decoration and adornment; he would make his clerks his knights and fighting men. That is excellently put, for the laws are indeed the true armor and weapons which maintain and protect land and people, yes, the empire and worldly government itself, as has been sufficiently stated above. Wisdom is indeed better than might [Eccles. 9:16], and pious jurists are the true knights who defend the emperor and the princes. One could cite many passages to this effect from the poets and the histories, but it would

take too long. Solomon himself declares in Ecclesiastes 9[:15] that a poor man by his wisdom delivered a city from a mighty king.

By this I do not mean to say that we should despise, reject, or do away with soldiers, fighting men, and those whose business is war. They too, when they are obedient, help with their fist to maintain peace and protect things. Every occupation has its own honor before God, as well as its own requirements and duties.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

You are the great High Priest;  
 You have prepared the feast  
 Of holy love;  
 And in our mortal pain  
 None calls on You in vain;  
 Our plea do not disdain;  
 Help from above.

—Shepherd of Tender Youth  
 (LSB 864:3)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L45)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession III–IV

## 19 JUNE

### Psalmody

- <sup>9</sup> Be gracious to me, O LORD,  
 for I am | in distress;\*  
 my eye is wasted from grief;  
 my soul and my body | also.
- <sup>10</sup> For my life is spent with sorrow,  
 and my years with | sighing;\*  
 my strength fails because of my iniquity,  
 and my bones | waste away.
- <sup>14</sup> But I trust in you, | O LORD;\*  
 I say, “You | are my God.”
- <sup>15</sup> My times are | in your hand;\*  
 rescue me from the hand of my enemies  
 and from my perse- | cutors!
- <sup>16</sup> Make your face shine on your | servant;\*  
 save me in your | steadfast love!
- <sup>17</sup> O LORD, let me not be put to shame,  
 for I call up- | on you;\*  
 let the wicked be put to shame; let them  
 go silently | to Sheol.
- <sup>18</sup> Let the lying | lips be mute,\*  
 which speak insolently against the  
 righteous in pride | and contempt.
- <sup>19</sup> Oh, how abundant is your goodness,  
 which you have stored up for those  
 who | fear you\*  
 and worked for those who take refuge  
 in you, in the sight of the children  
 of | mankind!  
 —Psalm 31:9–10, 14–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 102*

### Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 22:1–21

[The Proverbs of Solomon]

- <sup>1</sup> A good name is to be chosen  
 rather than great riches,  
 and favor is better than silver or gold.

<sup>2</sup>The rich and the poor meet together;  
the LORD is the maker of them all.

<sup>3</sup>The prudent sees danger and hides himself,  
but the simple go on and suffer for it.

<sup>4</sup>The reward for humility and fear  
of the LORD  
is riches and honor and life.

<sup>5</sup>Thorns and snares are in the way  
of the crooked;  
whoever guards his soul  
will keep far from them.

<sup>6</sup>Train up a child in the way he should go;  
even when he is old  
he will not depart from it.

<sup>7</sup>The rich rules over the poor,  
and the borrower is the slave  
of the lender.

<sup>8</sup>Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity,  
and the rod of his fury will fail.

<sup>9</sup>Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed,  
for he shares his bread with the poor.

<sup>10</sup>Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out,  
and quarreling and abuse will cease.

<sup>11</sup>He who loves purity of heart,  
and whose speech is gracious,  
will have the king as his friend.

<sup>12</sup>The eyes of the LORD keep watch  
over knowledge,  
but he overthrows the words  
of the traitor.

<sup>13</sup>The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!  
I shall be killed in the streets!"

<sup>14</sup>The mouth of forbidden women is a deep pit;  
he with whom the LORD is angry  
will fall into it.

<sup>15</sup>Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,  
but the rod of discipline drives  
it far from him.

<sup>16</sup>Whoever oppresses the poor to increase  
his own wealth,

or gives to the rich,  
will only come to poverty.

Words of the Wise

<sup>17</sup>Incline your ear, and hear the words  
of the wise,  
and apply your heart to my knowledge,  
<sup>18</sup>for it will be pleasant if you keep them  
within you,  
if all of them are ready on your lips.

<sup>19</sup>That your trust may be in the LORD,  
I have made them known to you today,  
even to you.

<sup>20</sup>Have I not written for you thirty sayings  
of counsel and knowledge,  
<sup>21</sup>to make you know what is right and true,  
that you may give a true answer  
to those who sent you?

### New Testament Reading: John 18:1–14

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus had spoken these words,  
he went out with his disciples across the  
Kidron Valley, where there was a garden,  
which he and his disciples entered. <sup>2</sup>Now  
Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the  
place, for Jesus often met there with his  
disciples. <sup>3</sup>So Judas, having procured a band  
of soldiers and some officers from the chief  
priests and the Pharisees, went there with  
lanterns and torches and weapons. <sup>4</sup>Then  
Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him,  
came forward and said to them, "Whom  
do you seek?" <sup>5</sup>They answered him, "Jesus  
of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he."  
Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with  
them. <sup>6</sup>When Jesus said to them, "I am he,"  
they drew back and fell to the ground. <sup>7</sup>So  
he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?"  
And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." <sup>8</sup>Jesus  
answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if

you seek me, let these men go.”<sup>9</sup>This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.”<sup>10</sup>Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.)<sup>11</sup>So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

Jesus Faces Annas and Caiaphas

<sup>12</sup>So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. <sup>13</sup>First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. <sup>14</sup>It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

### Writing

Now when God sends forth His Holy Gospel He deals with us in a twofold manner, first outwardly, then inwardly. Outwardly He deals with us through the oral word of the gospel and through material signs, that is, baptism and the sacrament of the altar. Inwardly He deals with us through the Holy Spirit, faith, and other gifts. But whatever their measure or order the outward factors should and must precede. The inward experience follows and is effected by the outward. God has determined to give the inward to no one except through the outward. For He wants to give no one the Spirit or faith outside of the outward Word and sign instituted by him, as He says in Luke 16[:29], “Let them hear Moses and the prophets.” Accordingly Paul can call baptism a “washing of regeneration” wherein God “richly pours out the Holy Spirit” [Titus 3:5].

And the oral gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith” (Rom. 1[:16]). Observe carefully, my brother, this order, for everything depends on it.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

For us by wickedness betrayed,  
For us, in crown of thorns arrayed,  
He bore the shameful cross and death;  
For us He gave His dying breath.

—O Love, How Deep (*LSB* 544:5)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, graciously behold this Your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and delivered into the hands of sinful men to suffer death upon the cross; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L33)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession V–VI

## 20 JUNE

### Psalmody

<sup>6</sup>Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.  
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of up- | rightness;\*

<sup>7</sup>you have loved righteousness  
and hated | wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your com- | panions;\*

<sup>8</sup> your robes are all fragrant with myrrh  
and aloes and | cassia.  
From ivory palaces stringed  
instruments | make you glad;\*  
<sup>9</sup> daughters of kings are among your  
ladies of honor; at your right hand  
stands the queen in gold of | Ophir.  
<sup>10</sup> Hear, O daughter, and consider,  
and in- | cline your ear.\*  
forget your people and  
your | father's house,  
<sup>11</sup> and the king will desire your | beauty.\*  
Since he is your lord, | bow to him.  
<sup>12</sup> The people of Tyre will seek  
your fa- | vor with gifts,\*  
the richest of the | people.  
—Psalm 45:6–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 45*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Proverbs 22:22–23:12**

[Words of the Wise]

<sup>22</sup> Do not rob the poor, because he is poor,  
or crush the afflicted at the gate,  
<sup>23</sup> for the LORD will plead their cause  
and rob of life those who rob them.  
<sup>24</sup> Make no friendship with a man given  
to anger,  
nor go with a wrathful man,  
<sup>25</sup> lest you learn his ways  
and entangle yourself in a snare.  
<sup>26</sup> Be not one of those who give pledges,  
who put up security for debts.  
<sup>27</sup> If you have nothing with which to pay,  
why should your bed be taken  
from under you?  
<sup>28</sup> Do not move the ancient landmark  
that your fathers have set.  
<sup>29</sup> Do you see a man skillful in his work?  
He will stand before kings;

he will not stand before obscure men.  
<sup>23:1</sup> When you sit down to eat with a ruler,  
observe carefully what is before you,  
<sup>2</sup> and put a knife to your throat  
if you are given to appetite.  
<sup>3</sup> Do not desire his delicacies,  
for they are deceptive food.  
<sup>4</sup> Do not toil to acquire wealth;  
be discerning enough to desist.  
<sup>5</sup> When your eyes light on it, it is gone,  
for suddenly it sprouts wings,  
flying like an eagle toward heaven.  
<sup>6</sup> Do not eat the bread of a man who is stingy;  
do not desire his delicacies,  
<sup>7</sup> for he is like one who is inwardly  
calculating.  
“Eat and drink!” he says to you,  
but his heart is not with you.  
<sup>8</sup> You will vomit up the morsels that you  
have eaten,  
and waste your pleasant words.  
<sup>9</sup> Do not speak in the hearing of a fool,  
for he will despise the good sense of  
your words.  
<sup>10</sup> Do not move an ancient landmark  
or enter the fields of the fatherless,  
<sup>11</sup> for their Redeemer is strong;  
he will plead their cause against you.  
<sup>12</sup> Apply your heart to instruction  
and your ear to words of knowledge.

**New Testament Reading: John 18:15–40**

Peter Denies Jesus

<sup>15</sup> Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so  
did another disciple. Since that disciple was  
known to the high priest, he entered with  
Jesus into the court of the high priest, <sup>16</sup>but  
Peter stood outside at the door. So the other  
disciple, who was known to the high priest,  
went out and spoke to the servant girl who

kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in.<sup>17</sup> The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”<sup>18</sup> Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

<sup>19</sup>The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.<sup>20</sup> Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret.<sup>21</sup> Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.”<sup>22</sup> When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?”<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, “If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?”<sup>24</sup> Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Peter Denies Jesus Again

<sup>25</sup>Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.”<sup>26</sup> One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?”<sup>27</sup> Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.

Jesus Before Pilate

<sup>28</sup>Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor’s headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor’s headquarters, so that

they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover.<sup>29</sup> So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?”<sup>30</sup> They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.”<sup>31</sup> Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.”<sup>32</sup> This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

<sup>33</sup>So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”<sup>35</sup> Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”<sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”<sup>37</sup> Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”<sup>38</sup> Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him.<sup>39</sup> But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”<sup>40</sup> They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

## Writing

The ministry of the New Testament is not bound to places and persons like the Levitical [Old Testament] ministry was. Rather, it is spread throughout the whole world. That is where God gives His gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers [Ephesians 4:11]. Nor does this ministry work because of the authority of any person, but because of the Word given by Christ [Romans 10:17]. . . .

Christ gave the apostles only spiritual power (i.e., the command to teach the Gospel, to announce the forgiveness of sins, to administer the Sacraments, to excommunicate the godless without bodily force (by the Word)). He did not give them the power of the sword (the right to establish, occupy, or bestow kingdoms of the world [Romans 13:4]). For Christ says, “Go . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20). Also, “As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21).

It is clear that Christ was not sent to bear the sword or possess a worldly kingdom, as He Himself says, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). And Paul says, “Not that we lord it over your faith” (2 Corinthians 1:24); and “The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh” (2 Corinthians 10:4), and so forth.

—Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope 26, 31

## Hymnody

The star proclaims the King is here;  
But, Herod, why this senseless fear?  
For He who offers heav’nly birth  
Seeks not the kingdoms of this earth.

—The Star Proclaims the King Is Here  
(LSB 399:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, so govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your glorious return, we may persevere in both faith and holiness of living; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
(B87)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession VII–VIII

## 21 JUNE

## Psalmody

- <sup>22</sup> I will tell of your name to my | brothers;\*  
in the midst of the congregation  
I will | praise you:
- <sup>23</sup> You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you  
offspring of Jacob, glo- | rify him,\*  
and stand in awe of him,  
all you offspring of | Israel!
- <sup>24</sup> For he has not despised or abhorred the  
affliction of the afflicted, and he has not  
hidden his | face from him,\*  
but has heard, when he | cried to him.
- <sup>25</sup> From you comes my praise  
in the great congre- | gation,\*  
my vows I will perform before those  
who | fear him.

<sup>26</sup>The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall | praise the LORD!\*  
May your hearts live for- | ever!

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD,\*  
and all the families of the nations shall worship be- | fore you.  
—Psalm 22:22–27

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 21*

### Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 24:1–22

[Words of the Wise]

<sup>1</sup>Be not envious of evil men,  
nor desire to be with them,  
<sup>2</sup>for their hearts devise violence,  
and their lips talk of trouble.  
<sup>3</sup>By wisdom a house is built,  
and by understanding it is established;  
<sup>4</sup>by knowledge the rooms are filled  
with all precious and pleasant riches.  
<sup>5</sup>A wise man is full of strength,  
and a man of knowledge  
enhances his might,  
<sup>6</sup>for by wise guidance you can wage your war,  
and in abundance of counselors  
there is victory.  
<sup>7</sup>Wisdom is too high for a fool;  
in the gate he does not open his mouth.  
<sup>8</sup>Whoever plans to do evil  
will be called a schemer.  
<sup>9</sup>The devising of folly is sin,  
and the scoffer is an abomination  
to mankind.  
<sup>10</sup>If you faint in the day of adversity,  
your strength is small.  
<sup>11</sup>Rescue those who are being taken away  
to death;  
hold back those who are stumbling  
to the slaughter.

<sup>12</sup>If you say, “Behold, we did not know this,”  
does not he who weighs the heart  
perceive it?

Does not he who keeps watch over your soul  
know it,  
and will he not repay man according  
to his work?

<sup>13</sup>My son, eat honey, for it is good,  
and the drippings of the honeycomb  
are sweet to your taste.

<sup>14</sup>Know that wisdom is such to your soul;  
if you find it, there will be a future,  
and your hope will not be cut off.

<sup>15</sup>Lie not in wait as a wicked man against  
the dwelling of the righteous;  
do no violence to his home;

<sup>16</sup>for the righteous falls seven times  
and rises again,  
but the wicked stumble  
in times of calamity.

<sup>17</sup>Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,  
and let not your heart be glad  
when he stumbles,

<sup>18</sup>lest the LORD see it and be displeased,  
and turn away his anger from him.

<sup>19</sup>Fret not yourself because of evildoers,  
and be not envious of the wicked,

<sup>20</sup>for the evil man has no future;  
the lamp of the wicked will be put out.

<sup>21</sup>My son, fear the LORD and the king,  
and do not join with those who  
do otherwise,

<sup>22</sup>for disaster will arise suddenly from them,  
and who knows the ruin that will come  
from them both?

### New Testament Reading: John 19:1–22

Jesus Delivered to Be Crucified

<sup>1</sup>Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him.

<sup>2</sup>And the soldiers twisted together a crown  
of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed

him in a purple robe. <sup>3</sup>They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands. <sup>4</sup>Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” <sup>5</sup>So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” <sup>6</sup>When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.” <sup>7</sup>The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.” <sup>8</sup>When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. <sup>9</sup>He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup>So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” <sup>11</sup>Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

<sup>12</sup>From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.” <sup>13</sup>So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup>Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” <sup>15</sup>They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We

have no king but Caesar.” <sup>16</sup>So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

#### The Crucifixion

So they took Jesus, <sup>17</sup>and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. <sup>18</sup>There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. <sup>19</sup>Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” <sup>20</sup>Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. <sup>21</sup>So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’” <sup>22</sup>Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

#### Writing

For the coming of God’s kingdom to us happens in two ways: (a) here in time through the Word and faith [Matthew 13]; and (b) in eternity forever through revelation [Luke 19:11; 1 Peter 1:4–5]. Now we pray for both these things. We pray that the kingdom may come to those who are not yet in it, and, by daily growth that it may come to us who have received it, both now and hereafter in eternal life. All this is nothing other than saying, “Dear Father, we pray, give us first Your Word, so that the Gospel may be preached properly throughout the world. Second, may the Gospel be received in faith and work and live in us, so that through the Word and the Holy Spirit’s power [Romans 15:18–19], Your kingdom may triumph among us. And we pray that the devil’s kingdom be put down [Luke

11:17–20], so that he may have no right or power over us [Luke 10:17–19; Colossians 1], until at last his power may be utterly destroyed. So sin, death, and hell shall be exterminated [Revelation 20:13–14]. Then we may live forever in perfect righteousness and blessedness” [Ephesians 4:12–13].

—Large Catechism III 53–54

### Hymnody

Inscribed upon the cross we see  
In shining letters, “God is love.”  
He bears our sins upon the tree;  
He brings us mercy from above.

—We Sing the Praise of Him Who  
Died (LSB 429:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, though ruthless Pontius Pilate declared Your innocence before the crowds, You who knew no sin became sin for us. May the shame You bore for us on the cross give us the greatest honor so that we might always see that only in suffering can we see who You truly are, our glorious King and Savior; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1039)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession IX–XI

## 22 JUNE

### Psalmody

- <sup>12</sup> Many bulls en- | compass me,\*  
strong bulls of Bashan sur- | round me;  
<sup>13</sup> they open wide their | mouths at me,\*  
like a ravening and roaring | lion.  
<sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water, and all my  
bones are | out of joint;\*  
my heart is like wax; it is melted  
with- | in my breast;  
<sup>15</sup> my strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks | to my jaws;\*  
you lay me in the | dust of death.  
<sup>16</sup> For dogs en- | compass me;\*  
a company of evildoers encircles me;  
they have pierced my | hands and feet—  
<sup>17</sup> I can count | all my bones—\*  
they stare and gloat | over me;  
<sup>18</sup> they divide my garments a- | mong them,\*  
and for my clothing they | cast lots.  
<sup>19</sup> But you, O LORD, do not be | far off!\*  
O you my help, come quickly | to my aid!  
<sup>20</sup> Deliver my soul | from the sword,\*  
my precious life from the power | of  
the dog!  
<sup>21</sup> Save me from the mouth of the | lion!\*  
You have rescued me from the horns  
of the wild | oxen!  
—Psalm 22:12–21

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 22*

### Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 25:1–22

More Proverbs of Solomon

<sup>1</sup>These also are proverbs of Solomon  
which the men of Hezekiah king of  
Judah copied.

<sup>2</sup>It is the glory of God to conceal things,  
but the glory of kings is to search  
things out.

<sup>3</sup>As the heavens for height,  
and the earth for depth,  
so the heart of kings is unsearchable.

<sup>4</sup>Take away the dross from the silver,  
and the smith has material  
for a vessel;

<sup>5</sup>take away the wicked from the presence  
of the king,  
and his throne will be established  
in righteousness.

<sup>6</sup>Do not put yourself forward  
in the king's presence  
or stand in the place of the great,

<sup>7</sup>for it is better to be told, "Come up here,"  
than to be put lower in the presence  
of a noble.

What your eyes have seen  
<sup>8</sup>do not hastily bring into court,  
for what will you do in the end,  
when your neighbor puts you  
to shame?

<sup>9</sup>Argue your case with your neighbor  
himself,  
and do not reveal another's secret,

<sup>10</sup>lest he who hears you bring shame  
upon you,  
and your ill repute have no end.

<sup>11</sup>A word fitly spoken  
is like apples of gold in a setting  
of silver.

<sup>12</sup>Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold  
is a wise reprovener to a listening ear.

<sup>13</sup>Like the cold of snow in the time  
of harvest  
is a faithful messenger to those  
who send him;  
he refreshes the soul of his masters.

<sup>14</sup>Like clouds and wind without rain  
is a man who boasts of a gift  
he does not give.

<sup>15</sup>With patience a ruler may be persuaded,  
and a soft tongue will break a bone.

<sup>16</sup>If you have found honey, eat only  
enough for you,  
lest you have your fill of it  
and vomit it.

<sup>17</sup>Let your foot be seldom in your  
neighbor's house,  
lest he have his fill of you  
and hate you.

<sup>18</sup>A man who bears false witness against  
his neighbor  
is like a war club, or a sword,  
or a sharp arrow.

<sup>19</sup>Trusting in a treacherous man  
in time of trouble  
is like a bad tooth or a foot that slips.

<sup>20</sup>Whoever sings songs to a heavy heart  
is like one who takes off a garment  
on a cold day,  
and like vinegar on soda.

<sup>21</sup>If your enemy is hungry,  
give him bread to eat,  
and if he is thirsty,  
give him water to drink,

<sup>22</sup>for you will heap burning coals  
on his head,  
and the LORD will reward you.

*Additional Reading: Proverbs 26:1–28*

**New Testament Reading: John 19:23–42**

<sup>23</sup>When the soldiers had crucified Jesus,  
they took his garments and divided them  
into four parts, one part for each soldier; also  
his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven  
in one piece from top to bottom, <sup>24</sup>so they

said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says,

“They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the soldiers did these things, <sup>25</sup>but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” <sup>27</sup>Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

#### The Death of Jesus

<sup>28</sup>After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” <sup>29</sup>A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. <sup>30</sup>When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

#### Jesus’ Side Is Pierced

<sup>31</sup>Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. <sup>32</sup>So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. <sup>33</sup>But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup>But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. <sup>35</sup>He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the

truth—that you also may believe. <sup>36</sup>For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” <sup>37</sup>And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

#### Jesus Is Buried

<sup>38</sup>After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. <sup>39</sup>Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. <sup>40</sup>So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. <sup>41</sup>Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. <sup>42</sup>So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

#### Writing

“I just want you to know from the beginning, sir, that I am a believer,” [the young Pastor Fridfeldt] said [to the older pastor]. . . .

“So you are a believer, I’m glad to hear that. What do you believe in?”

Fridfeldt stared dumbfounded at his superior. . . .

“But, sir, I am simply saying that I am a believer.”

“Yes, I hear that, my boy. But what is it that you believe in?”

Fridfeldt was almost speechless.

“But don’t you know, sir, what it means to be a believer?”

“That is a word which can stand for things that differ greatly, my boy. I ask only what it is that *you* believe in.”

“In Jesus, of course,” answered Fridfeldt, raising his voice. “I mean—I mean that I have given him my heart.” . . .

“Do you consider *that* something to give him?”

By this time, Fridfeldt was almost in tears.

“But sir, if you do not give your heart to Jesus, you cannot be saved.”

“You are right, my boy. And it is just as true that, if you think you are saved because you give Jesus your heart, you will not be saved. You see, my boy,” he continued reassuringly, as he continued to look at the young pastor’s face, in which uncertainty and resentment were shown in a struggle for the upper hand, “it is *one thing* to choose Jesus as one’s Lord and Savior, to give him one’s heart and commit oneself to him, and that he now accepts one into his little flock; it is a very different thing to believe on him as a Redeemer of sinners, of whom one is chief. One does not choose a Redeemer for oneself, you understand, nor give one’s heart to him. The heart is a rusty old can on a junk heap. A fine birthday gift, indeed! But a wonderful Lord passes by, and has mercy on the wretched tin can, sticks his walking cane through it, and rescues it from the junk pile and takes it home with him. That is how it is.”

—Bo Giertz

## Hymnody

No work is left undone  
Of all the Father willed;  
His toil, His sorrows, one by one,  
The Scriptures have fulfilled.

—O Perfect Life of Love (*LSB* 452:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, our Savior and Lord,  
You declared that the work of bringing  
in a new creation was accomplished by  
Your declaration from the cross that “It is  
finished.” Give us eyes to see the signs of  
the new creation in Your ongoing healing  
of our bodies and souls through Your Holy  
Sacraments, where You continue to come  
to us as our Creator who is bringing in the  
new creation; for You live and reign with the  
Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now  
and forever. (1040)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XII–XIII

## 23 JUNE

## Psalmody

<sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully  
and wonder- | fully made.\*

Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it | very well.

<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hid- | den from you,\*  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the  
depths | of the earth.

<sup>16</sup>Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every | one of them,\*

the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there were | none of them.

<sup>17</sup>How precious to me are your thoughts, | O God!\*

How vast is the | sum of them!

<sup>18</sup>If I would count them,  
they are more | than the sand.\*

I awake, and I am still | with you.

<sup>23</sup>Search me, O God, and | know my heart!\*

Try me and | know my thoughts!

<sup>24</sup>And see if there be any grievous | way in me,\*

and lead me in the way ever- | lasting!

—Psalm 139:14–18, 23–24

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 16*

### Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 27:1–24

[More Proverbs of Solomon]

<sup>1</sup>Do not boast about tomorrow,  
for you do not know what a day  
may bring.

<sup>2</sup>Let another praise you,  
and not your own mouth;  
a stranger, and not your own lips.

<sup>3</sup>A stone is heavy, and sand is weighty,  
but a fool's provocation is heavier  
than both.

<sup>4</sup>Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming,  
but who can stand before jealousy?

<sup>5</sup>Better is open rebuke  
than hidden love.

<sup>6</sup>Faithful are the wounds of a friend;  
profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

<sup>7</sup>One who is full loathes honey,  
but to one who is hungry everything  
bitter is sweet.

<sup>8</sup>Like a bird that strays from its nest  
is a man who strays from his home.

<sup>9</sup>Oil and perfume make the heart glad,  
and the sweetness of a friend comes  
from his earnest counsel.

<sup>10</sup>Do not forsake your friend  
and your father's friend,  
and do not go to your brother's house  
in the day of your calamity.

Better is a neighbor who is near  
than a brother who is far away.

<sup>11</sup>Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad,  
that I may answer him who reproaches me.

<sup>12</sup>The prudent sees danger and hides himself,  
but the simple go on and suffer for it.

<sup>13</sup>Take a man's garment when he has put up  
security for a stranger,  
and hold it in pledge when he puts up  
security for an adulteress.

<sup>14</sup>Whoever blesses his neighbor  
with a loud voice,  
rising early in the morning,  
will be counted as cursing.

<sup>15</sup>A continual dripping on a rainy day  
and a quarrelsome wife are alike;

<sup>16</sup>to restrain her is to restrain the wind  
or to grasp oil in one's right hand.

<sup>17</sup>Iron sharpens iron,  
and one man sharpens another.

<sup>18</sup>Whoever tends a fig tree will eat its fruit,  
and he who guards his master  
will be honored.

<sup>19</sup>As in water face reflects face,  
so the heart of man reflects the man.

<sup>20</sup>Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied,  
and never satisfied are the eyes of man.

<sup>21</sup>The crucible is for silver, and the furnace  
is for gold,  
and a man is tested by his praise.

<sup>22</sup>Crush a fool in a mortar with a pestle  
along with crushed grain,

yet his folly will not depart from him.  
<sup>23</sup>Know well the condition of your flocks,  
 and give attention to your herds,  
<sup>24</sup>for riches do not last forever;  
 and does a crown endure  
 to all generations?

*Additional Reading: Proverbs 28:1–29:27*

## **New Testament Reading: John 20:1–18**

### The Resurrection

<sup>1</sup>Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup>So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>3</sup>So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup>Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, <sup>7</sup>and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup>for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples went back to their homes.

### Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

<sup>11</sup>But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. <sup>12</sup>And she saw two angels in

white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>14</sup>Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

## **Writing**

### The Chief Article

The first and chief article is this:

Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins and was raised again for our justification (Romans 4:24–25).

He alone is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29), and God has laid upon Him the iniquities of us all (Isaiah 53:6).

All have sinned and are justified freely, without their own works or merits, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood (Romans 3:23–25).

This is necessary to believe. This cannot be otherwise acquired or grasped by any work, law, or merit. Therefore, it is clear and

certain that this faith alone justifies us. As St. Paul says:

For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. (Romans 3:28)

That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. [Romans 3:26]

Nothing of this article can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and everything else falls [Mark 13:31].

For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

And with His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

Upon this article everything that we teach and practice depends, in opposition to the pope, the devil, and the whole world. Therefore, we must be certain and not doubt this doctrine. Otherwise, all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all adversaries win the victory and the right over us.

—Smalcald Articles II I 1–5

**Hymnody**

Early hasten to the tomb  
Where they laid His breathless clay;  
All is solitude and gloom.  
Who has taken Him away?  
Christ is ris'n! He meets our eyes.  
Savior, teach us so to rise.  
—Go to Dark Gethsemane (LSB 436:4)

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting

life. We humbly pray that we may live before You in righteousness and purity forever; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L35)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Augsburg Confession XIV–XVI

**24 JUNE**

*The Nativity of St. John the Baptist*

**Psalmody**

- <sup>7</sup> Show us your steadfast love, | O LORD,\*  
and grant us your sal- | vation.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the | LORD  
will speak,\*  
for he will speak peace to his people,  
to his saints; but let them not turn back  
to | folly.
- <sup>9</sup> Surely his salvation is near to those  
who | fear him,\*  
that glory may dwell | in our land.
- <sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faith- | fulness meet;\*  
righteousness and peace kiss each | other.
- <sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs up | from the ground,\*  
and righteousness looks down | from  
the sky.
- <sup>12</sup> Yes, the LORD will give | what is good,\*  
and our land will yield its | increase.
- <sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go be- | fore him\*  
and make his foot- | steps a way.  
—Psalm 85:7–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 85*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Proverbs 30:1–9, 18–33**

The Words of Agur

<sup>1</sup>The words of Agur son of Jakeh.

The oracle.

The man declares, I am weary, O God;  
 I am weary, O God, and worn out.

<sup>2</sup>Surely I am too stupid to be a man.  
 I have not the understanding  
 of a man.

<sup>3</sup>I have not learned wisdom,  
 nor have I knowledge  
 of the Holy One.

<sup>4</sup>Who has ascended to heaven  
 and come down?  
 Who has gathered the wind  
 in his fists?

Who has wrapped up the waters  
 in a garment?  
 Who has established all the ends of  
 the earth?

What is his name, and what is his  
 son's name?  
 Surely you know!

<sup>5</sup>Every word of God proves true;  
 he is a shield to those who take  
 refuge in him.

<sup>6</sup>Do not add to his words,  
 lest he rebuke you and you be found  
 a liar.

<sup>7</sup>Two things I ask of you;  
 deny them not to me before I die:

<sup>8</sup>Remove far from me falsehood and lying;  
 give me neither poverty nor riches;  
 feed me with the food that is needful  
 for me,

<sup>9</sup>lest I be full and deny you  
 and say, "Who is the LORD?"  
 or lest I be poor and steal  
 and profane the name of my God. . . .

<sup>18</sup>Three things are too wonderful for me;  
 four I do not understand:

<sup>19</sup>the way of an eagle in the sky,  
 the way of a serpent on a rock,  
 the way of a ship on the high seas,  
 and the way of a man with a virgin.

<sup>20</sup>This is the way of an adulteress:  
 she eats and wipes her mouth  
 and says, "I have done no wrong."

<sup>21</sup>Under three things the earth trembles;  
 under four it cannot bear up:

<sup>22</sup>a slave when he becomes king,  
 and a fool when he is filled  
 with food;

<sup>23</sup>an unloved woman when she  
 gets a husband,  
 and a maidservant when she  
 displaces her mistress.

<sup>24</sup>Four things on earth are small,  
 but they are exceedingly wise:

<sup>25</sup>the ants are a people not strong,  
 yet they provide their food  
 in the summer;

<sup>26</sup>the rock badgers are a people  
 not mighty,  
 yet they make their homes  
 in the cliffs;

<sup>27</sup>the locusts have no king,  
 yet all of them march in rank;

<sup>28</sup>the lizard you can take in your hands,  
 yet it is in kings' palaces.

<sup>29</sup>Three things are stately in their tread;  
 four are stately in their stride:

<sup>30</sup>the lion, which is mightiest  
 among beasts  
 and does not turn back before any;

<sup>31</sup>the strutting rooster, the he-goat,  
 and a king whose army is with him.

<sup>32</sup>If you have been foolish,  
 exalting yourself,

or if you have been devising evil,  
put your hand on your mouth.

<sup>33</sup>For pressing milk produces curds,  
pressing the nose produces blood,  
and pressing anger produces strife.

## New Testament Reading: John 20:19–31

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

<sup>19</sup>On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” <sup>20</sup>When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” <sup>22</sup>And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

Jesus and Thomas

<sup>24</sup>Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

<sup>26</sup>Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” <sup>28</sup>Thomas

answered him, “My Lord and my God!”

<sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of This Book

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup>but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

## Writing

Now, someone may say: Look, my friend, you are saying a lot about faith, and claiming that our salvation depends solely upon it; now, I ask you, how does one come to faith? I will tell you. Our Lord Christ said, “Peace be with you. Behold My hands, etc.” [John 20:26–27]. [In other words, He is saying:] Look, man, I am the only one who has taken away your sins and redeemed you, etc.; now be at peace. Just as you inherited sin from Adam—not that you committed it, for I did not eat the apple, any more than you did, and yet this is how we came to be in sin—so we have not suffered [as Christ did], and therefore we were made free from death and sin by God’s work, not by our works. Therefore God says: Behold, man, I am your redemption [cf. Isa.43:3]; just as Paul said to the Corinthians: Christ is our justification, redemption, etc. [I Cor. 1:30]. Christ is our justification and redemption, as Paul says in this passage. And here our [Roman] masters say: Yes, *Redemptor*, Redeemer; this is true, but it is not enough.

Therefore I say again: Alien works, these make us good! Our Lord Christ says: I am your justification. I have destroyed the sins

you have upon you. Therefore only believe in Me; believe that I am He who has done this; then you will be justified. For it is written, *Justicia est fides* [Righteousness is faith], righteousness is identical with faith and comes through faith. Therefore, if we want to have faith, we should believe the gospel, Paul, etc., and not the papal breves, or the decretals, but rather guard ourselves against them as against fire. For everything that comes from the pope cries out: Give, give; and if you refuse, you are of the devil. It would be a small matter if they were only exploiting the people. But, unfortunately, it is the greatest evil in the world to lead the people to believe that outward works can save or make a man good.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
 “My pierced side, O Thomas, see,  
 And look upon My hands, My feet;  
 Not faithless but believing be.”  
 Alleluia!

—Sons and Daughters of the King  
 (LSB 471:6)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, through John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, You once proclaimed salvation. Now grant that we may know this salvation and serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F20)

### The Nativity of St. John the Baptist

St. John the Baptizer, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, was born into a priestly family. His birth was miraculously announced to his father by an angel of the Lord (Luke 1:5–23), and on the occasion of his birth, his aged father proclaimed a hymn of praise (1:67–79). This hymn is entitled the Benedictus and serves as the traditional Gospel Canticle in the Church’s Service of Morning Prayer. Events of John’s life and his teaching are known from accounts in all four of the Gospels. In the wilderness of Judea, near the Jordan River, John began to preach a call to repentance and a baptismal washing, and he told the crowds, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). John denounced the immoral life of the Herodian rulers, with the result that Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, had him arrested and imprisoned in the huge fortress of Machaerus near the Dead Sea. There Herod had him beheaded (Mark 6:17–29). John is remembered and honored as the one who with his preaching pointed to “the Lamb of God” and “prepared the way” for the coming of the Messiah.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XVII–XIX

25 JUNE

*Presentation of the Augsburg Confession*

**Psalmody**

<sup>41</sup>Let your steadfast love come to me, | O LORD,\*  
 your salvation according to your | promise;  
<sup>42</sup>then shall I have an answer for him who | taunts me,\*  
 for I trust | in your word.  
<sup>43</sup>And take not the word of truth utterly out | of my mouth,\*  
 for my hope is in your | just decrees.  
<sup>44</sup>I will keep your law con- | tinually,\*  
 forever and | ever,  
<sup>45</sup>and I shall walk in a | wide place,\*  
 for I have sought your | precepts.  
<sup>46</sup>I will also speak of your testimonies be- | fore kings\*  
 and shall not be | put to shame,  
<sup>47</sup>for I find my delight in your com- | mandments,\*  
 which | I love.  
<sup>48</sup>I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, | which I love,\*  
 and I will meditate on your | statutes.  
 —Psalm 119:41–48

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 73*

**Old Testament Reading:  
 Proverbs 31:10–31**

The Woman Who Feared the Lord

<sup>10</sup>An excellent wife who can find?  
 She is far more precious than jewels.  
<sup>11</sup>The heart of her husband trusts in her,  
 and he will have no lack of gain.  
<sup>12</sup>She does him good, and not harm,  
 all the days of her life.

<sup>13</sup>She seeks wool and flax,  
 and works with willing hands.  
<sup>14</sup>She is like the ships of the merchant;  
 she brings her food from afar.  
<sup>15</sup>She rises while it is yet night  
 and provides food for her household  
 and portions for her maidens.  
<sup>16</sup>She considers a field and buys it;  
 with the fruit of her hands she plants  
 a vineyard.  
<sup>17</sup>She dresses herself with strength  
 and makes her arms strong.  
<sup>18</sup>She perceives that her merchandise  
 is profitable.  
 Her lamp does not go out at night.  
<sup>19</sup>She puts her hands to the distaff,  
 and her hands hold the spindle.  
<sup>20</sup>She opens her hand to the poor  
 and reaches out her hands to the needy.  
<sup>21</sup>She is not afraid of snow for her household,  
 for all her household are clothed  
 in scarlet.  
<sup>22</sup>She makes bed coverings for herself;  
 her clothing is fine linen and purple.  
<sup>23</sup>Her husband is known in the gates  
 when he sits among the elders  
 of the land.  
<sup>24</sup>She makes linen garments and sells them;  
 she delivers sashes to the merchant.  
<sup>25</sup>Strength and dignity are her clothing,  
 and she laughs at the time to come.  
<sup>26</sup>She opens her mouth with wisdom,  
 and the teaching of kindness is  
 on her tongue.  
<sup>27</sup>She looks well to the ways of her household  
 and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
<sup>28</sup>Her children rise up and call her blessed;  
 her husband also, and he praises her:  
<sup>29</sup>“Many women have done excellently,  
 but you surpass them all.”

<sup>30</sup>Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,  
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be  
praised.

<sup>31</sup>Give her of the fruit of her hands,  
and let her works praise her in the gates.

## New Testament Reading: John 21:1–25

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

<sup>1</sup>After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. <sup>2</sup>Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. <sup>3</sup>Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

<sup>4</sup>Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Jesus said to them, “Children, do you have any fish?” They answered him, “No.” <sup>6</sup>He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. <sup>7</sup>That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. <sup>8</sup>The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

<sup>9</sup>When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” <sup>11</sup>So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not

torn. <sup>12</sup>Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. <sup>14</sup>This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus and Peter

<sup>15</sup>When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” <sup>16</sup>He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” <sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.” <sup>18</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” <sup>19</sup>(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”

Jesus and the Beloved Apostle

<sup>20</sup>Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who had been reclining at table close to him and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?” <sup>21</sup>When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?” <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”

<sup>23</sup>So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?”

<sup>24</sup>This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

<sup>25</sup>Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

### Writing

These are the chief articles that seem to be in controversy. We could have mentioned more abuses. But here we have set forth only the chief points in order to avoid making this Confession too long. From these chief points the rest may be easily judged. There have been, for example, great complaints about indulgences, pilgrimages, and the abuse of excommunication. Our parishes have been troubled in many ways by dealers in indulgences. There were endless arguments between the pastors and the monks about who has the right in parishes to hear confessions, do funerals, give sermons on extraordinary occasions, and innumerable other things. We have passed over such issues so that the chief points in this matter, briefly set forth, might be more easily understood. Nothing has been said or brought up for the rebuke of anyone. We have mentioned only those things we thought it was necessary to talk about so that it would be understood that in doctrine and ceremonies we have received nothing contrary to Scripture or the Church universal. It is clear that we

have been very careful to make sure no new ungodly doctrine creeps into our churches.

We present these articles in accordance with Your Imperial Majesty’s edict, in order to show our Confession and let people see a summary of our teachers’ doctrine. If there is anything that anyone might desire in this Confession, we are ready, God willing, to present more thorough information according to the Scriptures.

—Augsburg Confession Conclusion  
1–7

### Hymnody

Send, O Lord, Your Holy Spirit  
On Your servant now, we pray;  
Let him prove a faithful shepherd  
That no lamb be led astray.  
Your pure teaching to proclaim,  
To extol Your holy name,  
And to feed Your lambs, dear Savior,  
Make his aim and sole endeavor.

—Send, O Lord, Your Holy Spirit  
(*LSB* 681:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, You preserved the teaching of the apostolic Church through the confession of the true faith at Augsburg. Continue to cast the bright beams of Your light upon Your Church that we, being instructed by the doctrine of the blessed apostles, may walk in the light of Your truth and finally attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1041)

## Presentation of the Augsburg Confession

The Augsburg Confession, the principal doctrinal statement of the theology of Martin Luther and the Lutheran reformers, was written largely by Philip Melancthon. At its heart, it confesses the justification of sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, for the sake of Christ alone. Signed by leaders of many German cities and regions, the confession was formally presented to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at Augsburg, Germany, on June 25, 1530. A few weeks later, Roman Catholic authorities rejected the Confession, which Melancthon defended in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531). In 1580, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession was included in the Book of Concord.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XX 1–18

26 JUNE

*Jeremiah*

Proper for June 26–August 6 for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.

## Psalmody

<sup>19</sup> Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who | fear you\* and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of | mankind!

<sup>20</sup> In the cover of your presence you hide them from the | plots of men;\* you store them in your shelter from the | strife of tongues.

<sup>21</sup> Blessèd | be the LORD,\* for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged | city.

<sup>22</sup> I had said in my alarm, “I am cut off | from your sight.”\* But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to | you for help.

<sup>23</sup> Love the LORD, all | you his saints!\* The LORD preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who | acts in pride.

<sup>24</sup> Be strong, and let your heart take | courage,\* all you who wait | for the LORD!  
—Psalm 31:19–24

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 31*

## Old Testament Reading: Joshua 1:1–18

God Commissions Joshua

<sup>1</sup>After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, <sup>2</sup>“Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. <sup>3</sup>Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. <sup>4</sup>From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. <sup>5</sup>No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake

you. <sup>6</sup>Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. <sup>7</sup>Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. <sup>8</sup>This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. <sup>9</sup>Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua Assumes Command

<sup>10</sup>And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, <sup>11</sup>“Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, ‘Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.’”

<sup>12</sup>And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, <sup>13</sup>“Remember the word that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.’<sup>14</sup>Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, <sup>15</sup>until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving

them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

<sup>16</sup>And they answered Joshua, “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. <sup>17</sup>Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! <sup>18</sup>Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.”

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 8:1–25**

Saul Ravages the Church

<sup>1</sup>And Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. <sup>2</sup>Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup>But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Philip Proclaims Christ in Samaria

<sup>4</sup>Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. <sup>5</sup>Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. <sup>6</sup>And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. <sup>7</sup>For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. <sup>8</sup>So there was much joy in that city.

Simon the Magician Believes

<sup>9</sup>But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. <sup>10</sup>They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” <sup>11</sup>And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. <sup>12</sup>But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup>Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

<sup>14</sup>Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup>who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup>for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup>saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” <sup>20</sup>But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! <sup>21</sup>You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. <sup>22</sup>Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>23</sup>For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” <sup>24</sup>And Simon answered,

“Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.”

<sup>25</sup>Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

## Writing

I am as sure as I live that nothing is so near to me as God. God is nearer to me than I am to myself; my existence depends on the nearness and presence of God. He is also near things of wood and stone, but they know it not. If a piece of wood became as aware of the nearness of God as an archangel is, the piece of wood would be as happy as an archangel. For this reason man is happier than the inanimate wood, because he knows and understands how God is near him. His happiness increases and diminishes in proportion to the increase and diminution in his knowledge of this. His happiness does not arise from this that God is near him, and in him, and that He possesses God; but from this, that he *knows* the nearness of God, and loves Him, and is aware that “the Kingdom of God is near.” So, when I think on God’s Kingdom, I am compelled to be silent because of its immensity, because God’s Kingdom is none other than God Himself with all His riches.

—Meister Eckhart

## Hymnody

Giver of grace, descend from high;  
 Your sev'nfold gifts to us supply;  
 Help us eternal truths receive  
 And practice all that we believe;  
 Give us Yourself that we may see  
 The glory of the Trinity.

—Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid  
 (LSB 500:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, through the prophet Jeremiah, You continued the prophetic pattern of teaching Your people the true faith and demonstrating through miracles Your presence in the creation to heal it of its brokenness. Grant that Your Church may see in Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the final end-times prophet whose teaching and miracles continue in Your Church through the healing medicine of the Gospel and the Sacraments; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (1042)

## Jeremiah

The prophet Jeremiah was active as God's prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah around 627 to 582 BC. As a prophet he predicted, witnessed, and lived through the Babylonian siege and eventual destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC. In his preaching, he often used symbols, such as an almond rod and a boiling pot (Jeremiah 1:11–14), wine jars (13:12–14), and a potter at work (18:1–17). His entire prophetic ministry was a sermon, communicating through word and deed God's anger toward His rebellious people. He suffered repeated rejection and persecution by his countrymen. As far as can be known, Jeremiah died in Egypt, having been taken

there forcibly. He is remembered and honored for fearlessly calling God's people to repentance.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XX 19–40

## 27 JUNE

*Cyril of Alexandria, Pastor and Confessor*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;\*  
 according to your abundant mercy blot out my trans- | gressions.
- <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my in- | iquity,\*  
 and cleanse me | from my sin!
- <sup>3</sup> For I know my trans- | gressions,\*  
 and my sin is ever be- | fore me.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in in- | iquity,\*  
 and in sin did my mother  
 con- | ceive me.
- <sup>6</sup> Behold, you delight in truth  
 in the inward | being,\*  
 and you teach me wisdom  
 in the | secret heart.
- <sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop,  
 and I | shall be clean;\*  
 wash me, and I shall be whit- | er  
 than snow.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and | gladness;\*  
 let the bones that you have bro- | ken  
 rejoice.

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face | from my sins,\*  
and blot out all my in- | iquities.  
—Psalm 51:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 51*

### Old Testament Reading: Joshua 2:1–24

Rahab Hides the Spies

<sup>1</sup>And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. <sup>2</sup>And it was told to the king of Jericho, “Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” <sup>3</sup>Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.” <sup>4</sup>But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, “True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. <sup>5</sup>And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.” <sup>6</sup>But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. <sup>7</sup>So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

<sup>8</sup>Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof<sup>9</sup> and said to the men, “I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. <sup>10</sup>For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who

were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. <sup>11</sup>And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. <sup>12</sup>Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father’s house, and give me a sure sign <sup>13</sup>that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” <sup>14</sup>And the men said to her, “Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the LORD gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.”

<sup>15</sup>Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. <sup>16</sup>And she said to them, “Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way.” <sup>17</sup>The men said to her, “We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. <sup>18</sup>Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father’s household.

<sup>19</sup>Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. <sup>20</sup>But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear.” <sup>21</sup>And she said, “According to your words, so be it.” Then she

sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

<sup>22</sup>They departed and went into the hills and remained there three days until the pursuers returned, and the pursuers searched all along the way and found nothing. <sup>23</sup>Then the two men returned. They came down from the hills and passed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and they told him all that had happened to them. <sup>24</sup>And they said to Joshua, “Truly the LORD has given all the land into our hands. And also, all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us.”

**New Testament Reading: Acts 8:26–40**

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

<sup>26</sup>Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. <sup>27</sup>And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup>and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup>And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” <sup>31</sup>And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup>Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter  
and like a lamb before its shearer  
is silent,  
so he opens not his mouth.

<sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice  
was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?  
For his life is taken away  
from the earth.”

<sup>34</sup>And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” <sup>35</sup>Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” <sup>38</sup>And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup>And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup>But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

**Writing**

When the blessed Gabriel announced to the holy Virgin the generation of the only-begotten Son of God according to the flesh, he said, “You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High” [Luke 1:31–32]. But He also was named Christ, because according to His human nature He was anointed with us, according to the words of the psalmist: “You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions” [Psalm 45:7]. For

though He was the giver of the Holy Spirit, He did not give it in part to those who were worthy, that is, to Himself. He was full of the Holy Spirit, and of His fullness we have all received, as it is written. Nevertheless, as He is man He was called “anointed,” that is, the Christ, to indicate that the Holy Spirit rested upon Him spiritually and not after the manner of men. This was so that the Holy Spirit might abide in us though He had been driven from us in the beginning by Adam’s fall. Therefore the only-begotten Word of God made flesh was called Christ. And since He possessed the power proper to God as His own, He performed miracles.

—Cyril of Alexandria

### Hymnody

A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth,  
The guilt of sinners bearing  
And, laden with the sins of earth,  
None else the burden sharing;  
Goes patient on, grows weak and faint,  
To slaughter led without complaint,  
That spotless life to offer,  
He bears the stripes, the wounds, the lies,  
The mockery, and yet replies,  
“All this I gladly suffer.”

—A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth  
(LSB 438:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, Your servant Cyril steadfastly proclaimed Your Son, Jesus Christ, to be one person, fully God and fully man. By Your infinite mercy, keep us constant in faith and worship of Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1043)

### Cyril of Alexandria, Pastor and Confessor

Cyril (ca. AD 376–444) became archbishop of Alexandria, Egypt, in AD 412. Throughout his career, he defended a number of orthodox doctrines, among them the teaching that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is “rightly called and truly is the Mother of God”—*Theotokos*, “the God-bearer” (Formula of Concord VIII 12). In AD 431 the Council of Ephesus affirmed this teaching that the Son of Mary is also true God. The writings of Cyril on the doctrines of the Trinity and the person of Christ reveal him to be one of the most able theologians of his time. Cyril’s Christology influenced subsequent Church councils and was a primary source for Lutheran confessional writings.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXI

## 28 JUNE

*Irenaeus of Lyons, Pastor*

### Psalmody

<sup>24</sup> My faithfulness and my steadfast love  
shall | be with him,\*  
and in my name shall his horn  
be ex- | alted.

<sup>25</sup> I will set his hand | on the sea\*  
and his right hand on the | rivers.

<sup>26</sup> He shall cry to me, ‘You are my | Father,\*  
my God, and the Rock  
of my sal- | vation.’

<sup>27</sup> And I will make him the | firstborn,\*  
the highest of the kings | of the earth.

<sup>28</sup> My steadfast love I will keep  
for him for- | ever,\*  
and my covenant will stand | firm  
for him.

<sup>29</sup> I will establish his offspring for- | ever\*  
and his throne as the days  
of the | heavens.

—Psalm 89:24–29

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 97*

### Old Testament Reading: Joshua 3:1–17

Israel Crosses the Jordan

<sup>1</sup>Then Joshua rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. <sup>2</sup>At the end of three days the officers went through the camp <sup>3</sup>and commanded the people, “As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it. <sup>4</sup>Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.” <sup>5</sup>Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” <sup>6</sup>And Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. <sup>8</sup>And as for you, command the priests who bear the

ark of the covenant, ‘When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.’” <sup>9</sup>And Joshua said to the people of Israel, “Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God.” <sup>10</sup>And Joshua said, “Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. <sup>11</sup>Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. <sup>12</sup>Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. <sup>13</sup>And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.”

<sup>14</sup>So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, <sup>15</sup>and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), <sup>16</sup>the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup>Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

**New Testament Reading: Acts 9:1–22**

## The Conversion of Saul

<sup>1</sup>But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

<sup>4</sup>And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” <sup>5</sup>And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. <sup>6</sup>But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” <sup>7</sup>The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. <sup>8</sup>Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup>And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

<sup>10</sup>Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” <sup>11</sup>And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” <sup>13</sup>But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of

mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. <sup>16</sup>For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” <sup>17</sup>So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; <sup>19</sup>and taking food, he was strengthened.

## Saul Proclaims Jesus in Synagogues

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. <sup>20</sup>And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” <sup>21</sup>And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?” <sup>22</sup>But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

**Writing**

We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. . . .

We allege . . . against those who do not recognize Paul as an apostle: that they should either reject the other words of the Gospel which we have come to know through Luke alone, and not make any use of them;

or else, if they do receive all these, they must necessarily admit also that testimony concerning Paul, when he (Luke) tells us that the Lord spoke at first to him from heaven: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? I am Jesus Christ, whom you persecute”; and then to Ananias, saying regarding him: “Go your way; for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name among the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him, from this time, how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” Those, therefore, who do not accept him [as a teacher], who was chosen by God for this purpose, that he might boldly bear His name, as being sent to the forementioned nations, despise the election of God and separate themselves from the company of the apostles. . . . But they are altogether deceived who imagine that they may learn from the Scriptural text adduced by heretics, that [doctrine] which their words plausibly teach. For error is plausible and bears a resemblance to the truth but requires to be disguised; while truth is without disguise and, therefore, has been entrusted to children.

—Irenaeus

### Hymnody

Praise for the light from heaven  
 And for the voice of awe;  
 Praise for the glorious vision  
 The persecutor saw.  
 O Lord, for Paul’s conversion,  
 We bless Your name today;  
 Come shine within our darkness,  
 And guide us on our way.

—By All Your Saints in Warfare  
 (LSB 517:12)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You upheld Your servant Irenaeus with strength to confess the truth against every blast of vain doctrine. By Your mercy, keep us steadfast in the true faith, that in constancy we may walk in peace on the way that leads to eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1044)

### Irenaeus of Lyons, Pastor

Irenaeus (ca. AD 130–200), believed to be a native of Smyrna (modern Izmir, Turkey), studied in Rome and later became pastor in Lyons, France. Around AD 177, while Irenaeus was away from Lyons, a fierce persecution of Christians led to the martyrdom of his bishop. Upon Irenaeus’s return, he became bishop of Lyons. Among his most famous writings is a work condemning heresies, especially Gnosticism, which denied the goodness of creation. In opposition, Irenaeus confessed that God has redeemed his creation through the incarnation of the Son. Irenaeus also affirmed the teachings of the Scriptures handed down to and through him as being normative for the Church.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXII

## 29 JUNE

*St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Bless the LORD, | O my soul,\*  
and all that is within me,  
bless his | holy name!
- <sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, | O my soul,\*  
and forget not all his | benefits,
- <sup>3</sup> who forgives all your in- | iquity,\*  
who heals all your dis- | eases,
- <sup>4</sup> who redeems your life | from the pit,\*  
who crowns you with steadfast  
love and | mercy,
- <sup>5</sup> who satisfies | you with good\*  
so that your youth is renewed  
like the | eagle's.
- <sup>6</sup> The LORD works | righteousness\*  
and justice for all who | are oppressed.
- <sup>7</sup> He made known his ways to | Moses,\*  
his acts to the people of | Israel.
- <sup>8</sup> The LORD is merciful and | gracious,\*  
slow to anger and abounding  
in | steadfast love.
- <sup>9</sup> He will not | always chide,\*  
nor will he keep his anger for- | ever.
- <sup>10</sup> He does not deal with us according | to  
our sins,\*  
nor repay us according  
to our in- | iquities.
- <sup>11</sup> For as high as the heavens are a- | bove  
the earth,\*  
so great is his steadfast love toward those  
who | fear him;
- <sup>12</sup> as far as the east is | from the west,\*  
so far does he remove  
our transgres- | sions from us.  
—Psalm 103:1–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 103*

### Old Testament Reading: Joshua 4:1–24

Twelve Memorial Stones from the Jordan

<sup>1</sup>When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, <sup>2</sup>“Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, <sup>3</sup>and command them, saying, ‘Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests’ feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.’ ” <sup>4</sup>Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. <sup>5</sup>And Joshua said to them, “Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, <sup>6</sup>that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’ <sup>7</sup>then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever.”

<sup>8</sup>And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the LORD told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. <sup>9</sup>And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day. <sup>10</sup>For the priests bearing the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua

to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua.

The people passed over in haste. <sup>11</sup>And when all the people had finished passing over, the ark of the LORD and the priests passed over before the people. <sup>12</sup>The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh passed over armed before the people of Israel, as Moses had told them. <sup>13</sup>About 40,000 ready for war passed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho. <sup>14</sup>On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of him just as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life.

<sup>15</sup>And the LORD said to Joshua, <sup>16</sup>“Command the priests bearing the ark of the testimony to come up out of the Jordan.” <sup>17</sup>So Joshua commanded the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.” <sup>18</sup>And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

<sup>19</sup>The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. <sup>20</sup>And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. <sup>21</sup>And he said to the people of Israel, “When your children ask their fathers in times to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ <sup>22</sup>then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.’ <sup>23</sup>For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, <sup>24</sup>so that all the peoples of the

earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.”

### New Testament Reading: Acts 9:23–43

Saul Escapes from Damascus

<sup>23</sup>When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, <sup>24</sup>but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, <sup>25</sup>but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

Saul in Jerusalem

<sup>26</sup>And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup>But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup>So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup>And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. <sup>30</sup>And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

<sup>31</sup>So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

The Healing of Aeneas

<sup>32</sup>Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. <sup>33</sup>There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. <sup>34</sup>And Peter said to

him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose.

<sup>35</sup>And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

#### Dorcas Restored to Life

<sup>36</sup>Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. <sup>37</sup>In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. <sup>38</sup>Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay." <sup>39</sup>So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. <sup>40</sup>But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. <sup>41</sup>And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. <sup>42</sup>And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. <sup>43</sup>And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.

### Writing

But the proper, simple, and natural meaning of the words of institution teaches that Christ Himself is present with us in the celebration of the Supper with both His deity and His flesh, and that He comes to us in order to lay hold on us (Phil. 3:12) and join us to Himself as intimately as possible. This brings sweetest comfort. For Christ, both God and man, must lay hold on us in order

that there may be a union between Him and us. But we, weighed down by the burden of sin and pressed under the weight of our infirmity, are not yet able to enter the secret places of heaven (Col. 2:18) and penetrate to Him in glory. He Himself therefore comes to us in order to lay hold upon us with that nature by which He is our Brother. And because our weakness in this life cannot bear the glory of His majesty (Matt. 7:12ff.; Acts 9:3ff.), therefore His body and blood are present, distributed, and received under the bread and wine. Nor does He will that we wander around the gates of heaven uncertain in which area of heaven we ought to look for Christ in His human nature or whether we can find Him; but in the Supper He Himself is present in the external celebration and shows by visible signs where He wills to be present with His body and blood, and there we may safely seek Him and surely find Him, for there He Himself through the ministry distributes His body and blood to the communicants. These most sweet and necessary comforts will be completely snatched away from us if the substantial presence, distribution, and reception of Christ's body and blood are removed from the Supper.

—Martin Chemnitz

## Hymnody

We praise You for Saint Peter;  
 We praise You for Saint Paul;  
 They taught both Jew and Gentile  
 That Christ is all in all.  
 To cross and sword they yielded  
 And saw Your kingdom come;  
 O God, these two apostles  
 Reached life through martyrdom.

—By All Your Saints in Warfare (*LSB*  
 518:19)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful and eternal God, Your holy apostles Peter and Paul received grace and strength to lay down their lives for the sake of Your Son. Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit that we may confess Your truth and at all times be ready to lay down our lives for Him who laid down His life for us, even Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F21)

## St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles

The festival of St. Peter and St. Paul is probably the oldest of the saints' observances (dating from about the middle of the third century). An early tradition held that these two pillars of the New Testament Church were martyred on the same day in Rome during the persecution under Nero. In addition to this joint commemoration of their deaths, both apostles are commemorated separately: Peter on January 18 for his confession of Jesus as the Christ (Matthew 16:13–16), and Paul on January 25 for his conversion (Acts 9:1–19). The New Testament tells us much about both apostles. Peter was with Jesus from the beginning of

His ministry and served as a leader among the disciples. Despite his steadfast faith, Scripture also records some of his failures, such as his rebuke of Jesus (Matthew 16:21–23) and his threefold denial of his Lord (Matthew 26:69–75). Following Jesus' ascension, Peter continued as a leader in the Church (Acts 1:15; 2:14; 15:7). Paul, a devout Jew also known as Saul, entered the scene as a persecutor of the Church. Following his miraculous conversion, in which the risen Christ Himself appeared to him, Paul became a powerful preacher of the grace of God. During his three missionary journeys (Acts 13–14; 16–18; 18–21) Paul traveled throughout modern-day Turkey and Greece. The New Testament account of his life ends with Paul under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16), though tradition holds that he went on to Spain before returning to Rome.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXIII

30 JUNE

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> When Israel went out from | Egypt,\*  
 the house of Jacob from a people  
 of strange | language,
- <sup>2</sup> Judah became his sanctu- | ary,\*  
 Israel his do- | minion.
- <sup>3</sup> The sea | looked and fled;\*  
 Jordan | turned back.
- <sup>4</sup> The mountains | skipped like rams,\*  
 the | hills like lambs.
- <sup>5</sup> What ails you, O sea, | that you flee?\*
 O Jordan, that you | turn back?

<sup>6</sup>O mountains, that you | skip like rams?\*

O | hills, like lambs?

<sup>7</sup>Tremble, O earth, at the presence | of  
the Lord,\*

at the presence of the God of | Jacob,

<sup>8</sup>who turns the rock into a pool of | water,\*  
the flint into a spring of | water.

—Psalm 114

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 144*

### Old Testament Reading: Joshua 5:1–6:5

The New Generation Circumcised

<sup>1</sup>As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel.

<sup>2</sup>At that time the LORD said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time.” <sup>3</sup>So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. <sup>4</sup>And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. <sup>5</sup>Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. <sup>6</sup>For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD; the LORD swore to them that he would not let them see the land that the LORD had sworn to their

fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>7</sup>So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised. For they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

<sup>8</sup>When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. <sup>9</sup>And the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.

First Passover in Canaan

<sup>10</sup>While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. <sup>11</sup>And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. <sup>12</sup>And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

The Commander of the Lord’s Army

<sup>13</sup>When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” <sup>14</sup>And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?” <sup>15</sup>And the commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

### The Fall of Jericho

<sup>6:1</sup>Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD said to Joshua, “See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. <sup>3</sup>You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. <sup>4</sup>Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. <sup>5</sup>And when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.”

### New Testament Reading: Acts 10:1–17

#### Peter and Cornelius

<sup>1</sup>At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, <sup>2</sup>a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. <sup>3</sup>About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.” <sup>4</sup>And he stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. <sup>5</sup>And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. <sup>6</sup>He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.” <sup>7</sup>When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him,

<sup>8</sup>and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

#### Peter’s Vision

<sup>9</sup>The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. <sup>10</sup>And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance <sup>11</sup>and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. <sup>12</sup>In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. <sup>13</sup>And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” <sup>14</sup>But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” <sup>15</sup>And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” <sup>16</sup>This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

<sup>17</sup>Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon’s house, stood at the gate.

### Writing

Out of His immense goodness and mercy, God provides for the public preaching of His divine eternal Law and His wonderful plan for our redemption, that of the holy, only saving Gospel of His eternal Son, our only Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. By this preaching He gathers an eternal Church for Himself from the human race and works in people’s hearts true repentance, knowledge of sins, and true faith in God’s Son, Jesus Christ. By this means, and in no other way (i.e., through His holy Word,

when people hear it preached or read it, and through the holy Sacraments when they are used according to His Word), God desires to call people to eternal salvation. He desires to draw them to Himself and convert, regenerate, and sanctify them.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 50

For even those who believe before being baptized, or become believing in Baptism, believe through the outward Word, which came first. For example, adults who have come to reason must first have heard “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” [Mark 16:16], even though they are at first unbelieving and receive the Spirit and Baptism ten years afterward. Cornelius, living among the Jews, had heard long before about the coming Messiah, through whom he was righteous before God (Acts 10:1–2). In such faith, his prayers and alms were acceptable to God (since Luke calls him devout and God-fearing). Without the Word coming first and without hearing it, he could not have believed or been righteous [Romans 10:17]. St. Peter, though, had to reveal to him that the Messiah (in whom he had previously believed as one who would come in the future) now had come, lest his faith in the coming Messiah hold him captive among the Jewish people, who were hardened and unbelieving. He must now know that he is saved by the present Messiah and must not, with the Jewish people, deny or persecute Him.

—Smalcald Articles III VIII 7–8

## Hymnody

What God’s almighty pow’r has made,  
In mercy He is keeping.  
By morning glow or evening shade  
His eye is never sleeping.  
Within the kingdom of His might  
All things are just and good and right:  
To God all praise and glory!

—Sing Praise to God, the Highest  
Good (LSB 819:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth,  
You opened Peter’s eyes to see that all of  
creation is good and is to be used by Your  
people for their delight and joy. Open our  
eyes to see that our bodies, restored by You  
in Holy Baptism, proclaim the goodness of  
Your creative will that in paradise will come  
to the fullness of what You created us to be;  
through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
(1045)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXIV 1–20

## 1 JULY

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Clap your hands, all | peoples!\*  
Shout to God with loud | songs of joy!

<sup>2</sup> For the LORD, the Most High,  
is | to be feared,\*  
a great king over | all the earth.

<sup>3</sup> He subdued peoples | under us,\*  
and nations un- | der our feet.

<sup>4</sup>He chose our heritage | for us,\*  
 the pride of Jacob | whom he loves.  
<sup>5</sup>God has gone up | with a shout,\*  
 the LORD with the sound of a | trumpet.  
<sup>6</sup>Sing praises to God, sing | praises!\*  
 Sing praises to our King, sing | praises!  
<sup>7</sup>For God is the King of | all the earth;\*  
 sing praises | with a psalm!  
 —Psalm 47:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 75*

**Old Testament Reading: Joshua 6:6–27**

[The Fall of Jericho]

<sup>6</sup>So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the LORD.” <sup>7</sup>And he said to the people, “Go forward. March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD.”

<sup>8</sup>And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the LORD went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them. <sup>9</sup>The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets, and the rear guard was walking after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually. <sup>10</sup>But Joshua commanded the people, “You shall not shout or make your voice heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout.” <sup>11</sup>So he caused the ark of the LORD to circle the city, going about it once. And they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

<sup>12</sup>Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

<sup>13</sup>And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the LORD walked on, and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them, and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets blew continually. <sup>14</sup>And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days.

<sup>15</sup>On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. <sup>16</sup>And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, “Shout, for the LORD has given you the city. <sup>17</sup>And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.

<sup>18</sup>But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. <sup>19</sup>But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD.”

<sup>20</sup>So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. <sup>21</sup>Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

<sup>22</sup>But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, “Go into the prostitute’s house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her.” <sup>23</sup>So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel. <sup>24</sup>And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. <sup>25</sup>But Rahab the prostitute and her father’s household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

<sup>26</sup>Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, “Cursed before the LORD be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho.

“At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation,  
and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates.”

<sup>27</sup>So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 10:18–33**

[Peter’s Vision]

<sup>18</sup>[Cornelius’s servants] called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. <sup>19</sup>And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup>Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.”

<sup>21</sup>And Peter went down to the men and said,

“I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?” <sup>22</sup>And they said, “Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.” <sup>23</sup>So he invited them in to be his guests.

The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. <sup>24</sup>And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. <sup>25</sup>When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. <sup>26</sup>But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.” <sup>27</sup>And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. <sup>28</sup>And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. <sup>29</sup>So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me.”

<sup>30</sup>And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing <sup>31</sup>and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. <sup>32</sup>Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’ <sup>33</sup>So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”

## Writing

There also have been others who denied the truth of the Incarnation and introduced a kind of fictional incarnation. The Manicheans said that God’s Son assumed not a real, but a phantasy, body . . . Clearly, they reduce the whole mystery of the Incarnation to a fiction. . . .

This position wipes out the authority of Scripture. Since the likeness of flesh is not flesh, the likeness of walking not walking, and so of the rest, Scripture lies in saying: “The Word was made flesh” (John 1:14)—if it was but phantasy flesh. . . .

But . . . the suspicion of a phantasy body was removed from the minds of the disciples by our Lord after the resurrection. For we read in Luke (24:37–39) that the disciples, “being troubled and frightened, supposed that they saw a spirit,” namely, when they saw Jesus. “And He said to them: Why are you troubled and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I myself. Handle and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have.” For in vain did He offer Himself to be touched, if He had had none but a phantasy body.

Again, the Apostles show themselves suitable witnesses of Christ, for Peter says: “Him,” namely, Jesus, “God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest. Not to all the people, but to witnesses preordained by God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He arose again from the dead” (Acts 10:40–41). And John the Apostle . . . says: “That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life: we witness” (I John 1:1–2).

—Thomas Aquinas

## Hymnody

While I am a pilgrim here,  
Let Thy love my spirit cheer;  
As my guide, my guard, my friend,  
Lead me to my journey’s end.

—Come My Soul, With Every Care  
(LSB 779:5)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, You called Cornelius the Gentile soldier to hear the Word proclaimed for his salvation and that of his household. As he responded to the hearing of Your Word with the giving of alms, so also may we be led to acts of mercy and charity as we embody Christ in our daily lives; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1046)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXIV 21–41

## 2 JULY

*The Visitation (1-Year Lectionary)*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;\*  
according to your abundant mercy blot out my trans- | gressions.
- <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my in- | iquity,\*  
and cleanse me | from my sin!
- <sup>3</sup> For I know my trans- | gressions,\*  
and my sin is ever be- | fore me.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.  
<sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in in- | iquity,\*  
 and in sin did my mother  
 con- | ceive me.  
<sup>6</sup> Behold, you delight in truth  
 in the inward | being,\*  
 and you teach me wisdom  
 in the | secret heart.  
<sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop,  
 and I | shall be clean;\*  
 wash me, and I shall be whit- | er  
 than snow.  
<sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and | gladness,\*  
 let the bones that you have  
 bro- | ken rejoice.  
<sup>9</sup> Hide your face | from my sins,\*  
 and blot out all my in- | iquities.  
 —Psalm 51:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 60*

### Old Testament Reading: Joshua 7:1–26

Israel Defeated at Ai

<sup>1</sup>But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the Lord burned against the people of Israel.

<sup>2</sup>Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, “Go up and spy out the land.” And the men went up and spied out Ai. <sup>3</sup>And they returned to Joshua and said to him, “Do not have all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are few.” <sup>4</sup>So about 3,000 men went up there from the people. And they fled before the men of Ai, <sup>5</sup>and the men

of Ai killed about thirty-six of their men and chased them before the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them at the descent. And the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

<sup>6</sup>Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads. <sup>7</sup>And Joshua said, “Alas, O Lord GOD, why have you brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan! <sup>8</sup>O Lord, what can I say, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! <sup>9</sup>For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will you do for your great name?”

The Sin of Achan

<sup>10</sup>The LORD said to Joshua, “Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? <sup>11</sup>Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. <sup>12</sup>Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. <sup>13</sup>Get up! Consecrate the people and say, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, God of Israel, “There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you.” <sup>14</sup>In the morning therefore you shall be

brought near by your tribes. And the tribe that the LORD takes by lot shall come near by clans. And the clan that the LORD takes shall come near by households. And the household that the LORD takes shall come near man by man. <sup>15</sup>And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel.”

<sup>16</sup>So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken. <sup>17</sup>And he brought near the clans of Judah, and the clan of the Zerahites was taken. And he brought near the clan of the Zerahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. <sup>18</sup>And he brought near his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. <sup>19</sup>Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.” <sup>20</sup>And Achan answered Joshua, “Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did: <sup>21</sup>when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

<sup>22</sup>So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. <sup>23</sup>And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the people of Israel. And they laid them down before the LORD. <sup>24</sup>And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak and the bar of gold, and his sons

and daughters and his oxen and donkeys and sheep and his tent and all that he had. And they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup>And Joshua said, “Why did you bring trouble on us? The LORD brings trouble on you today.” And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. <sup>26</sup>And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his burning anger. Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 10:34–48**

Gentiles Hear the Good News

<sup>34</sup>So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup>but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup>As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), <sup>37</sup>you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: <sup>38</sup>how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. <sup>39</sup>And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, <sup>40</sup>but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, <sup>41</sup>not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup>And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge

of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup>To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

#### The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

<sup>44</sup>While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. <sup>45</sup>And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. <sup>46</sup>For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, <sup>47</sup>“Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” <sup>48</sup>And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

### Writing

Grace has more power than nature. Yet, so far, we have only spoken of the grace of a prophet’s blessing. But if the blessing of man had such power as to change nature, in the Old Testament miracles, what are we to say of that divine consecration where the very words of the Lord and Savior operate? For the Word of Christ makes the Sacrament that you receive what it is. But if the word of Elijah had power to bring down fire from heaven, shall not the word of Christ have power to change the nature of the elements? You read concerning the creation of the world: “He spoke and they were made, He commanded and they were created.” Shall not the word of Christ, which was able to create from nothing, be able to change things that already are into what they were not? . . .

But why make use of arguments? Let us use the examples He gives, and by the example of the incarnation prove the truth of the mystery. Did the course of nature proceed as usual when the Lord Jesus was born of Mary? If we look to the usual course, a woman ordinarily conceives after connection with a man. Yet His body was born of the Virgin. Why do you seek the order of nature in the body of Christ, seeing that the Lord Jesus Himself was born of a virgin, not according to nature? The true flesh of Christ was crucified and buried, so the Sacrament of His body is truly His body.

The Lord Jesus Himself proclaims: “This is My body.” Before the blessing of the heavenly words it is spoken of as bread; after the consecration, the body is proclaimed. So, too, with the blood. And you say, “Amen,” that is, “It is true.” Let the heart within confess what the mouth utters; let the soul feel what the voice speaks.

—Ambrose

### Hymnody

For Christ bore our sins, and not His own,  
When He on the cross was hanging;  
And then He arose and moved the stone  
That we, unto Him belonging,  
Might join with angelic hosts to raise  
Our voices in endless singing.

—O Day Full of Grace (*LSB* 503:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You chose the virgin Mary to be the mother of Your Son and made known through her Your gracious regard for the poor and lowly and despised. Grant that we may receive Your Word in humility and faith, and so be made one with Jesus Christ,

Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F18)

**The Visitation (1-Year Lectionary)**

John the Baptizer and Jesus, the two great figures of salvation history, now come together in the visit to Elizabeth by the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:39–45), both of whom conceived their children under miraculous circumstances. Thus John is brought into the presence of Jesus while they are still in their mothers’ wombs. This presence of the Lord causes a response by the child John as he leaps in Elizabeth’s womb. John’s response to the presence of Jesus, the Messiah, foreshadows John’s own role as forerunner. Already now, a new creation is beginning, and a baby still in the womb hails the new creation’s inception. Foreshadowed in John’s leap are the miracles of Jesus, who will cause all creation to leap at His presence: “The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them” (Luke 7:22). The incarnate presence of the Messiah also evokes a response from Elizabeth, who proclaims Mary’s blessedness. Mary’s Magnificat (1:46–55) provides the theological significance of this meeting as Mary sums up her place in salvation history. Mary’s song is a hymn to God for His gracious gifts to the least in this world, whom He has lifted up out of lowliness solely because of His grace and mercy.

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Augsburg Confession XXV

**3 JULY**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>5</sup> Blessed are those whose strength is | in you,\*  
in whose heart are  
the highways to | Zion.
- <sup>6</sup> As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a | place of springs;\*  
the early rain also covers | it with pools.
- <sup>7</sup> They go from | strength to strength;\*  
each one appears before God in | Zion.
- <sup>8</sup> O LORD God of hosts, | hear my prayer;\*  
give ear, O God of | Jacob!  
—Psalm 84:5–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 45*

**Old Testament Reading: Joshua 8:1–28**

The Fall of Ai

<sup>1</sup>And the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land. <sup>2</sup>And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its livestock you shall take as plunder for yourselves. Lay an ambush against the city, behind it.”  
<sup>3</sup>So Joshua and all the fighting men arose to go up to Ai. And Joshua chose 30,000 mighty men of valor and sent them out by night. <sup>4</sup>And he commanded them, “Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind it. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you remain ready. <sup>5</sup>And I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And when they come out against us just as before, we shall flee before them. <sup>6</sup>And

they will come out after us, until we have drawn them away from the city. For they will say, 'They are fleeing from us, just as before.' So we will flee before them. <sup>7</sup>Then you shall rise up from the ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will give it into your hand. <sup>8</sup>And as soon as you have taken the city, you shall set the city on fire. You shall do according to the word of the Lord. See, I have commanded you." <sup>9</sup>So Joshua sent them out. And they went to the place of ambush and lay between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai, but Joshua spent that night among the people.

<sup>10</sup>Joshua arose early in the morning and mustered the people and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. <sup>11</sup>And all the fighting men who were with him went up and drew near before the city and encamped on the north side of Ai, with a ravine between them and Ai. <sup>12</sup>He took about 5,000 men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. <sup>13</sup>So they stationed the forces, the main encampment that was north of the city and its rear guard west of the city. But Joshua spent that night in the valley. <sup>14</sup>And as soon as the king of Ai saw this, he and all his people, the men of the city, hurried and went out early to the appointed place toward the Arabah to meet Israel in battle. But he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city. <sup>15</sup>And Joshua and all Israel pretended to be beaten before them and fled in the direction of the wilderness. <sup>16</sup>So all the people who were in the city were called together to pursue them, and as they pursued Joshua they were drawn away from the city. <sup>17</sup>Not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. They left the city open and pursued Israel.

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. <sup>19</sup>And the men in the ambush rose quickly out of their place, and as soon as he had stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and captured it. And they hurried to set the city on fire. <sup>20</sup>So when the men of Ai looked back, behold, the smoke of the city went up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that, for the people who fled to the wilderness turned back against the pursuers. <sup>21</sup>And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had captured the city, and that the smoke of the city went up, then they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. <sup>22</sup>And the others came out from the city against them, so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side. And Israel struck them down, until there was left none that survived or escaped. <sup>23</sup>But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him near to Joshua.

<sup>24</sup>When Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the open wilderness where they pursued them, and all of them to the very last had fallen by the edge of the sword, all Israel returned to Ai and struck it down with the edge of the sword. <sup>25</sup>And all who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000, all the people of Ai. <sup>26</sup>But Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had devoted all the inhabitants of Ai to destruction. <sup>27</sup>Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as their plunder, according to the word of the LORD that he commanded Joshua. <sup>28</sup>So Joshua burned Ai and made it forever a heap of ruins, as it is to this day.

**New Testament Reading: Acts 11:1–18**

Peter Reports to the Church

<sup>1</sup>Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. <sup>2</sup>So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, <sup>3</sup>“You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” <sup>4</sup>But Peter began and explained it to them in order: <sup>5</sup>“I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. <sup>6</sup>Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. <sup>7</sup>And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ <sup>8</sup>But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ <sup>9</sup>But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ <sup>10</sup>This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. <sup>11</sup>And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. <sup>12</sup>And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. <sup>13</sup>And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; <sup>14</sup>he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ <sup>15</sup>As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup>And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>17</sup>If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed

in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” <sup>18</sup>When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

**Writing**

A person who confesses that everything in him is nothing but sin includes all sins, excludes none, forgets none. Neither can the satisfaction be uncertain, because it is not our uncertain, sinful work. Rather, it is the suffering and blood of the innocent Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world [John 1:29].

This is the repentance John the Baptist preaches [Matthew 3:1–12]. And afterward, Christ does this in the Gospel [Mark 1:15], and so do we. By this preaching of repentance, we dash to the ground the pope and everything built upon our good works. For all of that is built upon a rotten and vain foundation, which is called a good work or law. And yet, this foundation has no good works but only wicked works. No one keeps the Law (as Christ says) but all transgress it (John 7:19). Therefore, the building ‹that is raised upon that rotten foundation› is nothing but falsehood and hypocrisy, even where it seems most holy and beautiful.

In Christians, this repentance continues until death. For through one’s entire life, repentance contends with the sin remaining in the flesh. Paul testifies that he wars with the law in his members (Romans 7:14–25) not by his own powers, but by the gift of the Holy Spirit that follows the forgiveness of sins [Romans 8:1–17]. This gift daily cleanses and

sweeps out the remaining sins and works to make a person truly pure and holy.

—Smalcald Articles III III 37–40

### Hymnody

May God bestow on us His grace and favor  
That we follow Christ our Savior  
And live together here in love and union  
Nor despise this blest Communion!  
O Lord, have mercy!  
Let not Thy good Spirit forsake us;  
Grant that heav'nly-minded He make us;  
Give Thy Church, Lord, to see  
Days of peace and unity:  
O Lord, have mercy!

—O Lord We Praise Thee (*LSB* 617:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, the gift of Your Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, was given to the Gentile Cornelius so that Christ dwelled in him and he dwelled in Christ. May that same Spirit of Jesus, which rested on us in Holy Baptism, give us courage to confess His holy name even in the face of the fiercest persecution, so that we might receive the crown of everlasting life; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1047)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXVI 1–20

## 4 JULY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>The Mighty One, God the LORD,  
speaks and sum- | mons the earth\*  
from the rising of the sun to its | setting.
- <sup>2</sup>Out of Zion, the perfection of | beauty,\*  
God | shines forth.
- <sup>3</sup>Our God comes; he does not keep | silence;\*  
before him is a devouring fire, around  
him a mighty | tempest.
- <sup>4</sup>He calls to the heav- | ens above\*  
and to the earth, that he may judge  
his | people:
- <sup>5</sup>“Gather to me my | faithful ones,\*  
who made a covenant with me  
by | sacrifice!”
- <sup>6</sup>The heavens declare his | righteousness,\*  
for God him- | self is judge!  
—Psalm 50:1–6

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 113*

### Old Testament Reading: Joshua 10:1–25

The Sun Stands Still

<sup>1</sup>As soon as Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard how Joshua had captured Ai and had devoted it to destruction, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, <sup>2</sup>he feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were warriors. <sup>3</sup>So Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, <sup>4</sup>“Come up to me and help me, and let us strike Gibeon. For it has made peace

with Joshua and with the people of Israel.”

<sup>5</sup>Then the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered their forces and went up with all their armies and encamped against Gibeon and made war against it.

<sup>6</sup>And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, “Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered against us.” <sup>7</sup>So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you.” <sup>9</sup>So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. <sup>10</sup>And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. <sup>11</sup>And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword.

<sup>12</sup>At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

“Sun, stand still at Gibeon,  
and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.”

<sup>13</sup>And the sun stood still,  
and the moon stopped,

until the nation took vengeance on their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. <sup>14</sup>There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel.

<sup>15</sup>So Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

Five Amorite Kings Executed

<sup>16</sup>These five kings fled and hid themselves in the cave at Makkedah. <sup>17</sup>And it was told to Joshua, “The five kings have been found, hidden in the cave at Makkedah.” <sup>18</sup>And Joshua said, “Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave and set men by it to guard them, <sup>19</sup>but do not stay there yourselves. Pursue your enemies; attack their rear guard. Do not let them enter their cities, for the LORD your God has given them into your hand.” <sup>20</sup>When Joshua and the sons of Israel had finished striking them with a great blow until they were wiped out, and when the remnant that remained of them had entered into the fortified cities, <sup>21</sup>then all the people returned safe to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah. Not a man moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel.

<sup>22</sup>Then Joshua said, “Open the mouth of the cave and bring those five kings out to me from the cave.” <sup>23</sup>And they did so, and brought those five kings out to him from the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. <sup>24</sup>And when they brought those kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, “Come near; put your

feet on the necks of these kings.” Then they came near and put their feet on their necks. <sup>25</sup>And Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous. For thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.”

*Additional Reading: Joshua 10:28–22:34*

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 11:19–30**

The Church in Antioch

<sup>19</sup>Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. <sup>20</sup>But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup>And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. <sup>22</sup>The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup>When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, <sup>24</sup>for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. <sup>25</sup>So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, <sup>26</sup>and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

<sup>27</sup>Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>28</sup>And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). <sup>29</sup>So the disciples

determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. <sup>30</sup>And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

### **Writing**

Beware of this: The poor man will come to you (there are so many now). He must buy things with the penny of his daily wages and live upon it. When you are harsh to him, as though everyone lived by your favor, and you skin and scrape him to the bone, and when you turn him away with pride and arrogance to whom you ought to give things without payment, he will go away wretched and sorrowful. Since he can complain to no one else, he will cry and call to heaven [Psalm 20:6; 146:8–9]. Then beware (I say again) as of the devil himself. For such groaning and calling will be no joke. It will have a weight that will prove too heavy for you and all the world. For it will reach Him who takes care of the poor, sorrowful hearts. He will not allow them to go unavenged [Isaiah 61:1–3]. But if you despise this and become defiant, see the One you have brought upon you. If you succeed and prosper, before all the world you may call God and me a liar.

—Large Catechism I 247

Whoever now seeks and desires good works will find here more than enough to do that are heartily acceptable and pleasing to God. In addition, they are favored and crowned with excellent blessings. So we are to be richly compensated for all that we do for our neighbor’s good and from friendship. King Solomon also teaches this in Proverbs 19:17, “Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his deed.” Here, then, you have a rich

Lord. He is certainly enough for you. He will not allow you to come up short in anything or to lack [Psalm 37:25]. So you can with a joyful conscience enjoy a hundred times more than you could scrape together with unfaithfulness and wrong. Now, whoever does not desire this blessing will find enough wrath and misfortune.

—Large Catechism I 252–253

### Hymnody

For Barnabas we praise You,  
Who kept Your law of love  
And, leaving earthly treasures,  
Sought riches from above.  
O Christ, our Lord and Savior,  
Let gifts of grace descend,  
That Your true consolation  
May through the world extend.

—By All Your Saints in Warfare  
(LSB 518:17)

### Prayer of the Day

Merciful Lord, Your Church expanded from Jerusalem to Antioch, where those who believed in Jesus were first called Christians. Through Your servants Barnabas and Paul, Gentiles were evangelized and now called by Your name. Give us courage to speak Your name even in the face of persecution, so that all might hear Your Holy Word and come to the knowledge of the truth; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1048)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXVI 21–45

## 5 JULY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> God shall arise, his enemies shall be | scattered;\*  
and those who hate him  
shall flee be- | fore him!

<sup>2</sup> As smoke is driven away,  
so you shall drive | them away;\*  
as wax melts before fire, so the wicked  
shall perish be- | fore God!

<sup>3</sup> But the righteous shall be glad;  
they shall exult be- | fore God;\*  
they shall be jubilant | with joy!

<sup>4</sup> Sing to God, sing praises | to his name;\*  
lift up a song to him who rides through  
the deserts; his name is the LORD;  
exult be- | fore him!

<sup>5</sup> Father of the fatherless and protector  
of | widows\*  
is God in his holy habi- | tation.

<sup>6</sup> God settles the solitary in a home; he leads  
out the prisoners to pros- | perity,\*  
but the rebellious dwell in a | parched  
land.

—Psalm 68:1–6

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 149*

### Old Testament Reading: Joshua 23:1–16

Joshua's Charge to Israel's Leaders

<sup>1</sup>A long time afterward, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies, and Joshua was old and well advanced in years, <sup>2</sup>Joshua summoned all Israel, its elders and heads, its judges and officers, and said to them, "I am now old and well advanced in years. <sup>3</sup>And you have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is the LORD your God who has fought for you. <sup>4</sup>Behold,

I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the west. <sup>5</sup>The LORD your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight. And you shall possess their land, just as the LORD your God promised you. <sup>6</sup>Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, <sup>7</sup>that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them, <sup>8</sup>but you shall cling to the Lord your God just as you have done to this day. <sup>9</sup>For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, no man has been able to stand before you to this day. <sup>10</sup>One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. <sup>11</sup>Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God. <sup>12</sup>For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, <sup>13</sup>know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you.

<sup>14</sup>“And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed. <sup>15</sup>But just as all the good things that

the LORD your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the evil things, until he has destroyed you from off this good land that the LORD your God has given you, <sup>16</sup>if you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you.”

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 12:1–25**

James Killed and Peter Imprisoned

<sup>1</sup>About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. <sup>2</sup>He killed James the brother of John with the sword, <sup>3</sup>and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. <sup>4</sup>And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. <sup>5</sup>So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Peter Is Rescued

<sup>6</sup>Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. <sup>7</sup>And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands. <sup>8</sup>And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him,

“Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.”<sup>9</sup> And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.<sup>10</sup> When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him.<sup>11</sup> When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.”

<sup>12</sup>When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.<sup>13</sup> And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer.<sup>14</sup> Recognizing Peter’s voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate.<sup>15</sup> They said to her, “You are out of your mind.” But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, “It is his angel!”<sup>16</sup> But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed.<sup>17</sup> But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, “Tell these things to James and to the brothers.” Then he departed and went to another place.

<sup>18</sup>Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter.<sup>19</sup> And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time there.

#### The Death of Herod

<sup>20</sup>Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king’s chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king’s country for food.<sup>21</sup> On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them.<sup>22</sup> And the people were shouting, “The voice of a god, and not of a man!”<sup>23</sup> Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.

<sup>24</sup>But the word of God increased and multiplied.

<sup>25</sup>And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark.

#### Writing

But there is one thing that I have never from my youth up been able to understand. I have never been able to understand where people got the idea that democracy was in some way opposed to tradition. It is obvious that tradition is only democracy extended through time. It is trusting to a consensus of common human voices rather than to some isolated or arbitrary record. . . . Tradition may be defined as an extension of the franchise. Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about. All democrats object to men being disqualified by the accident of birth;

tradition objects to their being disqualified by the accident of death. Democracy tells us not to neglect a good man's opinion, even if he is our groom; tradition asks us not to neglect a good man's opinion, even if he is our father. I, at any rate, cannot separate the two ideas of democracy and tradition; it seems evident to me that they are the same idea. We will have the dead at our councils. The ancient Greeks voted by stones; these shall vote by tombstones. It is all quite regular and official, for most tombstones, like most ballot papers, are marked with a cross.

—Gilbert K. Chesterton

### Hymnody

May God bestow on us His grace,  
With blessings rich provide us;  
And may the brightness of His face  
To life eternal guide us,  
That we His saving health may know,  
His gracious will and pleasure,  
And also to the nations show  
Christ's riches without measure  
And unto God convert them.

—May God Bestow on Us His Grace  
(LSB 823:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, shepherd of Your people, You raised up James the Just, brother of our Lord, to lead and guide Your Church. Grant that we may follow his example of prayer and reconciliation and be strengthened by the witness of his death; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F31)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXVII 1–23

## 6 JULY

*Isaiah*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Make a joyful noise to the LORD, | all  
the earth!\*

<sup>2</sup> Serve the LORD with gladness! Come  
into his presence with | singing!

<sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD, | he is God!\*

It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep  
of his | pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his | courts with praise!\*

Give thanks to him; | bless his name!

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good; his steadfast love  
endures for- | ever;\*

and his faithfulness to all gener- | ations.

—Psalm 100

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 5:1–8*

### Old Testament Reading: Joshua 24:1–31

The Covenant Renewal at Shechem

<sup>1</sup> Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel. And they presented themselves before God.

<sup>2</sup> And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. <sup>3</sup> Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and

led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac.<sup>4</sup> And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. And I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.<sup>5</sup> And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in the midst of it, and afterward I brought you out.

<sup>6</sup>“Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea. And the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea.<sup>7</sup> And when they cried to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and your eyes saw what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness a long time.<sup>8</sup> Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the other side of the Jordan. They fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, and you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you.<sup>9</sup> Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel. And he sent and invited Balaam the son of Beor to curse you,<sup>10</sup> but I would not listen to Balaam. Indeed, he blessed you. So I delivered you out of his hand.<sup>11</sup> And you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, and the leaders of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And I gave them into your hand.<sup>12</sup> And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow.<sup>13</sup> I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.”

#### Choose Whom You Will Serve

<sup>14</sup>“Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

<sup>16</sup>Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods,<sup>17</sup> for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed.<sup>18</sup> And the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.”

<sup>19</sup>But Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins.

<sup>20</sup>If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good.”<sup>21</sup> And the people said to Joshua,

“No, but we will serve the LORD.”<sup>22</sup> Then Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.”<sup>23</sup> He said, “Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel.”

<sup>24</sup>And the people said to Joshua, “The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.”<sup>25</sup> So Joshua made a covenant with the

people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem. <sup>26</sup>And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone and set it up there under the terebinth that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. <sup>27</sup>And Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD that he spoke to us. Therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God.” <sup>28</sup>So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

#### Joshua’s Death and Burial

<sup>29</sup>After these things Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being 110 years old. <sup>30</sup>And they buried him in his own inheritance at Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash.

<sup>31</sup>Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the LORD did for Israel.

*Additional Reading: Judges 1:1–36*

### New Testament Reading: Acts 13:1–12

#### Barnabas and Saul Sent Off

<sup>1</sup>Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup>While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” <sup>3</sup>Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

#### Barnabas and Saul on Cyprus

<sup>4</sup>So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. <sup>5</sup>When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. <sup>6</sup>When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. <sup>7</sup>He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. <sup>8</sup>But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. <sup>9</sup>But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him <sup>10</sup>and said, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? <sup>11</sup>And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.” Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. <sup>12</sup>Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

### Writing

Isaiah the prophet was born of the tribe of Judah, and for this reason he calls the Lord Jesus his cousin. His name means “the salvation of the Lord.” He wrote a marvelously beautiful account of the Savior of the world. Mary must have been reading the seventh chapter, on the virgin mother of Jesus, when the angel Gabriel came to her. The forty-third, fifty-third, and sixty-third

chapters shine forth from this book like pure jewels. Jerome said, “To me, Isaiah seems to have composed not a prophecy, but a Gospel.” Augustine said, “He could better be called an evangelist than a prophet.” In his youth, Augustine asked the bishop Ambrose for advice on what book in the Bible to read first. Ambrose replied that he should begin with Isaiah, since Isaiah would supersede all the others in his prophecies of Christ . . . It is a wondrous miracle that he named Cyrus or Cores, the liberator of the Israelites, by name two hundred years in advance (44:28; 45:1). Josephus writes that because of this, Cyrus was kind to the Israelites. Manasseh is thought to have had Isaiah cut into two parts with a wooden saw. Chrysostom (Conc. 33. super Matthaeum) lists the trivial reasons for Isaiah’s death: (1) He compared Jerusalem with Sodom and Gomorrah. (2) He boasted of having seen God, contrary to Moses in Exodus 38. (3) He said, “Call upon the Lord while He is near” (55:6); but God is near to all who call upon Him, etc. It happened to Isaiah according to the proverb: “If you beat the dog, you can expect to be bitten.”

—Valerius Herberger

### Hymnody

“Do not My holy name disgrace,  
Do not My Word of truth debase.  
Praise only that as good and true  
Which I Myself say and do.”  
Have mercy, Lord!

—These Are the Holy Ten  
Commandments (*LSB* 581:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, through the prophet Isaiah, You continued the prophetic pattern of teaching Your people the true faith and demonstrating through miracles Your presence in the creation to heal it of its brokenness. Grant that Your Church may see in Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the final end-times prophet whose teaching and miracles continue in Your Church through the healing medicine of the Gospel and the Sacraments; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1049)

### Isaiah

Isaiah son of Amoz is considered to be the greatest of the writing prophets and is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament prophet. His name means “Yahweh [the LORD] saves.” Isaiah prophesied to the people of Jerusalem and Judah from about 740 BC to 700 BC and was a contemporary of the prophets Amos, Hosea, and Micah. Isaiah was a fierce preacher of God’s Law, condemning the sin of idolatry. He was also a comforting proclaimer of the Gospel, repeatedly emphasizing God’s grace and forgiveness. For this he is sometimes called the Evangelist of the Old Testament. No prophet more clearly prophesied about the coming Messiah and His saving kingdom. He foretold not only the Messiah’s miraculous birth (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6), His endless reign (Isaiah 2:1–5; 11:1–16), and His public ministry (Isaiah 61:1–3), but most notably his Suffering Servant role and atoning death (Isaiah 52:13–53:12). The apostle John’s description of Isaiah, that Isaiah saw Jesus’ glory and spoke of Him (John 12:41), is an apt summary of Isaiah’s prophetic ministry.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXVII 24–43

### 7 JULY

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>Why do the | nations rage\*  
and the peoples | plot in vain?
- <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel to- | gether,\*  
against the LORD and against his  
anointed, | saying,
- <sup>3</sup>“Let us burst their | bonds apart\*  
and cast away their | cords from us.”
- <sup>4</sup>He who sits in the | heavens laughs;\*  
the Lord holds them in de- | rision.
- <sup>5</sup>Then he will speak to them | in his wrath,\*  
and terrify them in his fury, | saying,
- <sup>6</sup>“As for me, I have | set my King\*  
on Zion, my | holy hill.”
- <sup>7</sup>I will tell of | the decree.\*  
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;  
today I have be- | gotten you.
- <sup>8</sup>Ask of me, and I will make the nations  
your | heritage,\*  
and the ends of the earth  
your pos- | session.  
—Psalm 2:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 78:56–72*

#### Old Testament Reading: Judges 2:6–23

##### Israel’s Disobedience

<sup>1</sup>Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, “I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. I said, ‘I will never break my

covenant with you, <sup>2</sup>and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed my voice. What is this you have done? <sup>3</sup>So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.” <sup>4</sup>As soon as the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. <sup>5</sup>And they called the name of that place Bochim. And they sacrificed there to the LORD.

##### The Death of Joshua

<sup>6</sup>When Joshua dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land. <sup>7</sup>And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the LORD had done for Israel. <sup>8</sup>And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years. <sup>9</sup>And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. <sup>10</sup>And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel.

##### Israel’s Unfaithfulness

<sup>11</sup>And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. <sup>12</sup>And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD

to anger. <sup>13</sup>They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroath. <sup>14</sup>So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. <sup>15</sup>Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them for harm, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress.

#### The Lord Raises Up Judges

<sup>16</sup>Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. <sup>17</sup>Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so.

<sup>18</sup>Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. <sup>19</sup>But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways. <sup>20</sup>So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he said, “Because this people has transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, <sup>21</sup>I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, <sup>22</sup>in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in

the way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not.” <sup>23</sup>So the LORD left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

#### New Testament Reading: Acts 13:13–41

Paul and Barnabas at Antioch in Pisidia

<sup>13</sup>Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. <sup>15</sup>After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.”

<sup>16</sup>So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said:

“Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. <sup>17</sup>The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. <sup>18</sup>And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. <sup>19</sup>And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. <sup>20</sup>All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. <sup>21</sup>Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. <sup>22</sup>And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ <sup>23</sup>Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. <sup>24</sup>Before his coming,

John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. <sup>25</sup>And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’

<sup>26</sup>“Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. <sup>27</sup>For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. <sup>28</sup>And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. <sup>29</sup>And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. <sup>30</sup>But God raised him from the dead, <sup>31</sup>and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. <sup>32</sup>And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, <sup>33</sup>this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm,

“ ‘You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you.’

<sup>34</sup>And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

“ ‘I will give you the holy  
and sure blessings of David.’

<sup>35</sup>Therefore he says also in another psalm,

“ ‘You will not let your Holy One  
see corruption.’

<sup>36</sup>For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep

and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, <sup>37</sup>but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. <sup>38</sup>Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, <sup>39</sup>and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. <sup>40</sup>Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about:

<sup>41</sup>“ ‘Look, you scoffers,  
be astounded and perish;  
for I am doing a work in your days,  
a work that you will not believe,  
even if one tells it to you.’ ”

## Writing

Faith is that thing God declares to be righteousness. Paul adds that righteousness is credited freely. He says that it could not be credited freely if it were due because of works. Therefore, he excludes also the merit of moral works. For if justification before God were due to these moral works, faith would not be credited for righteousness without works. . . . Romans 10:10 says, “With the heart one believes and is justified.” Here he declares that faith is the righteousness of the heart.

We also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law. (Galatians 2:16)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8–9)

But to all who did receive Him, who

believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12–13)

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life. (John 3:14–15)

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned. (John 3:17–18)

Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by Him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. (Acts 13:38–39)

How could the office of Christ and justification be declared more clearly? . . . Christ was given, that we may believe that for His sake we are justified. . . . For Christ's sake we are accounted righteous when we believe that God, for His sake, has been reconciled to us.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV 89–97

### Hymnody

This is He whom seers in old time  
Chanted of with one accord,  
Whom the voices of the prophets  
Promised in their faithful word.  
Now He shines, the long-expected;

Let creation praise its Lord  
Evermore and evermore.

—Of the Father's Love Begotten  
(LSB 384:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Merciful Lord, You sent Paul and Barnabas to preach the Gospel in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch and announce that Jesus is the Messiah, the Holy One whose resurrection shows us that He will not see corruption. May our union with Him in Holy Baptism give us peace and comfort in being incorruptible, even as He is incorruptible; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1050)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXVII 44–62

## 8 JULY

### Psalmody

- <sup>5</sup>The LORD is my chosen portion | and  
my cup;\*  
you | hold my lot.
- <sup>6</sup>The lines have fallen for me  
in pleasant | places;\*  
indeed, I have a beautiful in- | heritance.
- <sup>7</sup>I bless the LORD who gives me | counsel;\*  
in the night also my heart  
in- | structs me.
- <sup>8</sup>I have set the LORD always be- | fore me;\*  
because he is at my right hand,  
I shall not be | shaken.
- <sup>9</sup>Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole  
being re- | joices;\*  
my flesh also | dwells secure.

<sup>10</sup>For you will not abandon my soul | to Sheol,\*  
 or let your holy one see cor- | ruption.  
<sup>11</sup>You make known to me the | path of life;\*  
 in your presence there is fullness  
 of joy; at your right hand are  
 pleasures for- | evermore.  
 —Psalm 16:5–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 139:12–18*

### Old Testament Reading: Judges 3:7–31

Othniel

<sup>7</sup>And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth. <sup>8</sup>Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. And the people of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years. <sup>9</sup>But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. <sup>10</sup>The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. <sup>11</sup>So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Ehud

<sup>12</sup>And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the LORD. <sup>13</sup>He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites, and went and defeated Israel. And they took possession of the city

of palms. <sup>14</sup>And the people of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

<sup>15</sup>Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, and the LORD raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab. <sup>16</sup>And Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, a cubit in length, and he bound it on his right thigh under his clothes. <sup>17</sup>And he presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man. <sup>18</sup>And when Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who carried the tribute. <sup>19</sup>But he himself turned back at the idols near Gilgal and said, “I have a secret message for you, O king.” And he commanded, “Silence.” And all his attendants went out from his presence. <sup>20</sup>And Ehud came to him as he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber. And Ehud said, “I have a message from God for you.” And he arose from his seat. <sup>21</sup>And Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. <sup>22</sup>And the hilt also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not pull the sword out of his belly; and the dung came out. <sup>23</sup>Then Ehud went out into the porch and closed the doors of the roof chamber behind him and locked them.

<sup>24</sup>When he had gone, the servants came, and when they saw that the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, “Surely he is relieving himself in the closet of the cool chamber.” <sup>25</sup>And they waited till they were embarrassed. But when he still did not open the doors of the roof chamber, they took the key and opened them, and there lay their lord dead on the floor.

<sup>26</sup>Ehud escaped while they delayed, and he passed beyond the idols and escaped to Seirah. <sup>27</sup>When he arrived, he sounded the trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim. Then the people of Israel went down with him from the hill country, and he was their leader. <sup>28</sup>And he said to them, “Follow after me, for the LORD has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand.” So they went down after him and seized the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites and did not allow anyone to pass over. <sup>29</sup>And they killed at that time about 10,000 of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men; not a man escaped. <sup>30</sup>So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

Shamgar

<sup>31</sup>After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed 600 of the Philistines with an oxgoad, and he also saved Israel.

### New Testament Reading: Acts 13:42–52

[Paul and Barnabas at Antioch in Pisidia]

<sup>42</sup>As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. <sup>43</sup>And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

<sup>44</sup>The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. <sup>45</sup>But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. <sup>46</sup>And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life,

behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. <sup>47</sup>For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,

“‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

<sup>48</sup>And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. <sup>49</sup>And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. <sup>50</sup>But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. <sup>51</sup>But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. <sup>52</sup>And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

### Writing

The preaching and hearing of God’s Word are the Holy Spirit’s instruments. By, with, and through these instruments the Spirit desires to work effectively, to convert people to God, and to work in them both to will and to do [Philippians 2:13]. . . .

God works through this means (i.e., the preaching and hearing of His Word). He breaks our hearts [Jeremiah 4:3–4] and draws us to Him [John 6:44]. Through the preaching of the Law, a person comes to know his sins and God’s wrath. He experiences in his heart true terrors, contrition, and sorrow. Through the preaching of, and reflection on, the Holy Gospel about the gracious forgiveness of sins in Christ, a spark of faith is kindled in him. This faith accepts the forgiveness of sins for Christ’s sake and comforts itself with the

Gospel promise. So the Holy Spirit (who does all this) is sent into the heart [Galatians 4:6].

. . . No conversion would follow [this preaching and hearing] if the power and effectiveness of the Holy Spirit were not added [1 Corinthians 3:6–7]. The Spirit enlightens and converts hearts through the Word preached and heard. So people believe this Word and agree with it. . . . [The preacher and the hearer] should be certain that when God’s Word is preached purely and truly, according to God’s command and will, and people listen attentively and seriously and meditate on it, God is certainly present with His grace. He grants, as has been said, what otherwise a person can neither accept nor give by his own powers. For we should not and cannot always judge from feeling about the presence, work, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, as to how and when they are experienced in the heart. They are often covered and happen in great weakness. Therefore, we should be certain about and agree with the promise that God’s Word preached and heard is «truly» an office and work of the Holy Spirit. He is certainly effective and works in our hearts by them (2 Corinthians 2:14–17; 3:5–6).

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 52, 54–56

### Hymnody

The Lord who, born of Mary,  
Came down as man and died,  
Who preached to all who listened,  
For us was crucified—  
This Lord, our living brother,  
In pow’r at God’s right hand,

Has chosen us to carry  
His truth to ev’ry land.

—On Galilee’s High Mountain  
(LSB 835:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You brought joy to Gentiles and persecution to Paul and Barnabas through their proclamation that Jesus is a light to all nations to bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Give us courage to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world, even in the face of opposition, knowing that it is through suffering that we enter the kingdom of God; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1051)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXVIII 1–18

## 9 JULY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> I give you thanks, O LORD, with | my whole heart;\*

before the gods I | sing your praise;

<sup>2</sup> I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your | faithfulness,\*

for you have exalted above all things your name | and your word.

<sup>3</sup> On the day I called, you | answered me;\* my strength of soul | you increased.

<sup>4</sup> All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, | O LORD,\*

for they have heard the words | of your mouth,

<sup>5</sup> and they shall sing of the ways | of the LORD.\*

for great is the glory | of the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>For though the LORD is high,  
he regards the | lowly,\*  
but the haughty he knows | from afar.  
—Psalm 138:1–6

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 86:8–17*

### Old Testament Reading: Judges 4:1–24

Deborah and Barak

<sup>1</sup>And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after Ehud died. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim. <sup>3</sup>Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help, for he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

<sup>4</sup>Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. <sup>5</sup>She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment. <sup>6</sup>She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali and said to him, “Has not the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded you, ‘Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking 10,000 from the people of Naphtali and the people of Zebulun. <sup>7</sup>And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin’s army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give him into your hand?’” <sup>8</sup>Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go.” <sup>9</sup>And she said, “I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the LORD will sell Sisera into

the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. <sup>10</sup>And Barak called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. And 10,000 men went up at his heels, and Deborah went up with him.

<sup>11</sup>Now Heber the Kenite had separated from the Kenites, the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaanannim, which is near Kedesh.

<sup>12</sup>When Sisera was told that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, <sup>13</sup>Sisera called out all his chariots, 900 chariots of iron, and all the men who were with him, from Harosheth-hagoyim to the river Kishon. <sup>14</sup>And Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the LORD go out before you?” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him. <sup>15</sup>And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak by the edge of the sword. And Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot. <sup>16</sup>And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

<sup>17</sup>But Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. <sup>18</sup>And Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Turn aside, my lord; turn aside to me; do not be afraid.” So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. <sup>19</sup>And he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. <sup>20</sup>And he said to her, “Stand at the opening of the tent, and if any man

comes and asks you, ‘Is anyone here?’ say, ‘No.’”<sup>21</sup>But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand. Then she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground while he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died.<sup>22</sup>And behold, as Barak was pursuing Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, “Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking.” So he went in to her tent, and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg in his temple.

<sup>23</sup>So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel.<sup>24</sup>And the hand of the people of Israel pressed harder and harder against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

*Additional Reading: Judges 5:1–31*

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 14:1–18**

Paul and Barnabas at Iconium

<sup>1</sup>Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed.<sup>2</sup>But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.<sup>3</sup>So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.<sup>4</sup>But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles.<sup>5</sup>When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them,<sup>6</sup>they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country,<sup>7</sup>and there they continued to preach the gospel.

Paul and Barnabas at Lystra

<sup>8</sup>Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked.<sup>9</sup>He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well,<sup>10</sup>said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And he sprang up and began walking.<sup>11</sup>And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”

<sup>12</sup>Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.<sup>13</sup>And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.<sup>14</sup>But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out,<sup>15</sup>“Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.<sup>16</sup>In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways.<sup>17</sup>Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”<sup>18</sup>Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.

## Writing

The great art and power of faith consist in seeing that which is not seen and in not seeing that which is nonetheless felt, aye, which oppresses and depresses a person; just as unbelief sees only what it feels and does not at all like to cling to that which it does not feel.

Therefore God does not confront faith with trivial things but with such things as all the world cannot bear, like death, sin, the world, and the devil. For all the world is not able to stand up against death but flees from it, is frightened by it, and is overpowered by it. But faith stands fast and battles with death, which devours all the world, and gains the victory over it and devours the insatiable devourer of human life.

Is not faith, which can hold its own against such mighty enemies and attain the victory, an almighty and unspeakably grand matter? Therefore St. John well says 1 John 5:4: “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Not that this is done in peace and undisturbed quietness, for it is a battle that is waged not without wounds and blood. Aye, in this battle the heart feels sin, death, the flesh, the devil, and the world so severely that it thinks it is surely lost, that sin and death have won, and that the devil has gained the upper hand. It feels little of the power of faith.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

“I am alone your God, the Lord;  
No other gods shall be adored.  
But you shall fully trust in Me  
And love Me wholeheartedly.”  
Have mercy, Lord!

—These Are the Holy Ten  
Commandments (LSB 581:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, in our bold proclamation of the Gospel, give us humility to know that those who hear us hear You, that those who preach and administer the Sacraments stand in Your stead and by Your command, and that whatever fruit is produced through our work comes from Your gracious hand; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1052)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXVIII 19–29

## 10 JULY

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Those who trust in the LORD are  
like Mount | Zion,\*  
which cannot be moved,  
but abides for- | ever.
- <sup>2</sup> As the mountains surround Jerusalem,  
so the LORD surrounds his | people,\*  
from this time forth and for- | evermore.
- <sup>3</sup> For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest  
on the land allotted to the | righteous,\*  
lest the righteous stretch out their  
hands to | do wrong.
- <sup>4</sup> Do good, O LORD, to those | who are good,\*  
and to those who are upright | in  
their hearts!
- <sup>5</sup> But those who turn aside to their crooked  
ways the LORD will lead away  
with evil- | doers!\*  
Peace be upon | Israel!  
—Psalm 125

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 7:1–8*

**Old Testament Reading: Judges 6:1–24**

## Midian Oppresses Israel

<sup>1</sup>The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD gave them into the hand of Midian seven years. <sup>2</sup>And the hand of Midian overpowered Israel, and because of Midian the people of Israel made for themselves the dens that are in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. <sup>3</sup>For whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. <sup>4</sup>They would encamp against them and devour the produce of the land, as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey. <sup>5</sup>For they would come up with their livestock and their tents; they would come like locusts in number—both they and their camels could not be counted—so that they laid waste the land as they came in. <sup>6</sup>And Israel was brought very low because of Midian. And the people of Israel cried out for help to the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>When the people of Israel cried out to the LORD on account of the Midianites, <sup>8</sup>the LORD sent a prophet to the people of Israel. And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage. <sup>9</sup>And I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. <sup>10</sup>And I said to you, ‘I am the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.’ But you have not obeyed my voice.”

## The Call of Gideon

<sup>11</sup>Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. <sup>12</sup>And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.” <sup>13</sup>And Gideon said to him, “Please, sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.” <sup>14</sup>And the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?” <sup>15</sup>And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” <sup>16</sup>And the LORD said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.” <sup>17</sup>And he said to him, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. <sup>18</sup>Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you.” And he said, “I will stay till you return.”

<sup>19</sup>So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them. <sup>20</sup>And the angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.” And he did so. <sup>21</sup>Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And

fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight.

<sup>22</sup>Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.” <sup>23</sup>But the LORD said to him, “Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die.” <sup>24</sup>Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

**New Testament Reading: Acts 14:19–15:5**

Paul Stoned at Lystra

<sup>19</sup>But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. <sup>20</sup>But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. <sup>21</sup>When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, <sup>22</sup>strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. <sup>23</sup>And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Paul and Barnabas Return to Antioch in Syria

<sup>24</sup>Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. <sup>25</sup>And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, <sup>26</sup>and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. <sup>27</sup>And when they arrived and

gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

<sup>28</sup>And they remained no little time with the disciples.

The Jerusalem Council

<sup>15:1</sup>But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” <sup>2</sup>And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. <sup>3</sup>So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. <sup>4</sup>When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. <sup>5</sup>But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.”

**Writing**

⟨The false apostles pushed circumcision (Acts 15:1) in order to establish their false doctrine that the works of the Law were necessary for righteousness and salvation [2 Corinthians 11:13]. They misused circumcision to confirm their error in people’s minds. Therefore, Paul says that he would not yield even for an hour, in order that the truth of the Gospel might continue unimpaired [Galatians 2:5].⟩

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord X 12

We supposed that the adversaries would defend human traditions on other grounds. Yet we did not think that this would happen, that they would condemn this article: We do not merit the forgiveness of sins or grace by celebrating human traditions. Since this article has been condemned, we have an easy and straightforward case. The adversaries are now openly Judaizing [Acts 15:1]; they are openly hindering the Gospel by the *doctrines of demons* (1 Timothy 4:1). For Scripture calls traditions doctrines of demons when it is taught that religious rites serve to merit the forgiveness of sins and grace. For they are then clouding over the Gospel, Christ's benefit, and the righteousness of faith. The Gospel teaches that through faith we receive freely, for Christ's sake, the forgiveness of sins and are reconciled to God. The adversaries, on the other hand, appoint another mediator: these traditions. By these they want to gain forgiveness of sins; by these they want to reconcile God's anger. But Christ clearly says, "In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession XV 3–5

### Hymnody

In God, my faithful God,  
I trust when dark my road;  
Great woes may overtake me,  
Yet He will not forsake me.  
My troubles He can alter;  
His hand lets nothing falter.

—In God, My Faithful God  
(LSB 745:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord and Giver of all good things, the same powers that crucified Jesus persecuted Paul as he bore on his body the marks of Jesus for preaching Christ crucified. Give us faith to believe that no matter what suffering we endure for the sake of Christ it is all gift and it is all good, so that, with Paul, we may rejoice in suffering as we bear on our bodies the marks of Jesus; through whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit are one God, now and forever. (1053)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXVIII 30–42

## 11 JULY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Give ear to my words, | O LORD;\*  
consider my | groaning.

<sup>2</sup> Give attention to the sound of my cry,  
my King | and my God,\*  
for to you | do I pray.

<sup>3</sup> O LORD, in the morning you | hear  
my voice;\*  
in the morning I prepare a sacrifice  
for | you and watch.

<sup>4</sup> For you are not a God who delights  
in | wickedness;\*  
evil may not | dwell with you.

<sup>5</sup> The boastful shall not stand be- | fore  
your eyes;\*  
you hate all evil- | doers.

<sup>6</sup> You destroy those | who speak lies;\*  
the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty  
and de- | ceitful man.

<sup>7</sup> But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.\*  
I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you.

<sup>8</sup> Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies;\*  
make your way straight before me.  
—Psalm 5:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 5*

### Old Testament Reading: Judges 6:25–40

[The Call of Gideon]

<sup>25</sup>That night the LORD said to him, “Take your father’s bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it <sup>26</sup>and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order. Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you shall cut down.” <sup>27</sup>So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal

<sup>28</sup>When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built. <sup>29</sup>And they said to one another, “Who has done this thing?” And after they had searched and inquired, they said, “Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing.” <sup>30</sup>Then the men of the town said to Joash, “Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has broken down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah beside it.” <sup>31</sup>But

Joash said to all who stood against him, “Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been broken down.” <sup>32</sup>Therefore on that day Gideon was called Jerubbaal, that is to say, “Let Baal contend against him,” because he broke down his altar.

<sup>33</sup>Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East came together, and they crossed the Jordan and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. <sup>34</sup>But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him. <sup>35</sup>And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.

The Sign of the Fleece

<sup>36</sup>Then Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, <sup>37</sup>behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said.” <sup>38</sup>And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water.

<sup>39</sup>Then Gideon said to God, “Let not your anger burn against me; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece. Please let it be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew.”

<sup>40</sup>And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

**New Testament Reading: Acts 15:6–21**

[The Jerusalem Council]

<sup>6</sup>The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. <sup>7</sup>And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. <sup>8</sup>And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, <sup>9</sup>and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. <sup>10</sup>Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? <sup>11</sup>But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”

<sup>12</sup>And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. <sup>13</sup>After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. <sup>14</sup>Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. <sup>15</sup>And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,

<sup>16</sup>“After this I will return,  
and I will rebuild the tent of David  
that has fallen;

I will rebuild its ruins,  
and I will restore it,

<sup>17</sup>that the remnant of mankind may seek  
the Lord,  
and all the Gentiles who are called  
by my name,

says the Lord, who makes these  
things <sup>18</sup>known from of old.’

<sup>19</sup>Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, <sup>20</sup>but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. <sup>21</sup>For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.”

**Writing**

A Hymn to God the Father

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,  
Which was my sin,

though it were done before?

Wilt Thou forgive that sin through  
which I run,

And do run still, though still I do deplore?  
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;  
For I have more.

Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won  
Others to sin, and made my sin their door?  
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun  
A year or two, but wallow'd in, a score?  
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;  
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun  
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;  
But swear by Thyself, that at my death

Thy Son

Shall shine as He shines now, and heretofore:  
And, having done that, Thou hast done;

I fear no more.

—John Donne

## Hymnody

People and realms of ev'ry tongue  
 Dwell on His love with sweetest song;  
 And infant voices shall proclaim  
 Their early blessings on His name.  
 —Jesus Shall Reign (*LSB* 832:3)

## Prayer of the Day

O almighty and most merciful God,  
 at the apostolic council, You gave Peter the  
 courage to represent Paul and gave James  
 the wisdom to show from Scripture that the  
 Gentiles are also called by Your name. May  
 Your Church continue boldly to proclaim  
 that salvation is by grace through faith and  
 not by works of Law; through Jesus Christ,  
 our Lord. (1054)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXVIII 43–60

12 JULY

## Psalmody

- <sup>10</sup> All nations sur- | rounded me;\*  
 in the name of the LORD I | cut them off!
- <sup>11</sup> They surrounded me, surrounded me  
 on | every side;\*  
 in the name of the LORD I | cut them off!
- <sup>12</sup> They surrounded me like bees; they went  
 out like a fire a- | mong thorns;\*  
 in the name of the LORD I | cut them off!
- <sup>13</sup> I was pushed hard, so that I was | falling,\*  
 but the LORD | helped me.
- <sup>14</sup> The LORD is my strength | and my song;\*  
 he has become my sal- | vation.

<sup>15</sup> Glad songs of salvation are in the tents  
 of the | righteous.\*

“The right hand of the LORD  
 does | valiantly,

<sup>16</sup> the right hand of the | LORD exalts,\*  
 the right hand of the LORD  
 does | valiantly!”

<sup>17</sup> I shall not die, but | I shall live,\*  
 and recount the deeds | of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup> The LORD has disciplined me se- | verely,\*  
 but he has not given me o- | ver to death.  
 —Psalm 118:10–18

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 108*

## Old Testament Reading: Judges 7:1–23

Gideon's Three Hundred Men

<sup>1</sup>Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all  
 the people who were with him rose early and  
 encamped beside the spring of Harod. And  
 the camp of Midian was north of them, by  
 the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD said to Gideon, “The people  
 with you are too many for me to give the  
 Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast  
 over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved  
 me.’ <sup>3</sup>Now therefore proclaim in the ears of  
 the people, saying, ‘Whoever is fearful and  
 trembling, let him return home and hurry  
 away from Mount Gilead.’ ” Then 22,000 of  
 the people returned, and 10,000 remained.

<sup>4</sup>And the LORD said to Gideon, “The  
 people are still too many. Take them down  
 to the water, and I will test them for you  
 there, and anyone of whom I say to you,  
 ‘This one shall go with you,’ shall go with  
 you, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This  
 one shall not go with you,’ shall not go.” <sup>5</sup>So  
 he brought the people down to the water.  
 And the LORD said to Gideon, “Every one  
 who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog

laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink.”<sup>6</sup> And the number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was 300 men, but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water.<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Gideon, “With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home.”<sup>8</sup> So the people took provisions in their hands, and their trumpets. And he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

<sup>9</sup>That same night the LORD said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand.”<sup>10</sup> But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant.<sup>11</sup> And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outposts of the armed men who were in the camp.<sup>12</sup> And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the people of the East lay along the valley like locusts in abundance, and their camels were without number, as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance.<sup>13</sup> When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade. And he said, “Behold, I dreamed a dream, and behold, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat.”<sup>14</sup> And his comrade answered, “This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp.”

<sup>15</sup>As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he

worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, “Arise, for the LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand.”<sup>16</sup> And he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars.<sup>17</sup> And he said to them, “Look at me, and do likewise. When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do.”<sup>18</sup> When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and shout, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon.’”

#### Gideon Defeats Midian

<sup>19</sup>So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands.<sup>20</sup> Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!”<sup>21</sup> Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled.<sup>22</sup> When they blew the 300 trumpets, the LORD set every man’s sword against his comrade and against all the army. And the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.<sup>23</sup> And the men of Israel were called out from Naphtali and from Asher and from all Manasseh, and they pursued after Midian.

*Additional Reading: Judges 7:24–13:15*

**New Testament Reading:  
Galatians 1:1–24**

Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—<sup>2</sup>and all the brothers who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup>who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, <sup>5</sup>to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

No Other Gospel

<sup>6</sup>I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—<sup>7</sup>not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup>But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. <sup>9</sup>As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

<sup>10</sup>For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Paul Called by God

<sup>11</sup>For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. <sup>12</sup>For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>13</sup>For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. <sup>14</sup>And

I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

<sup>15</sup>But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, <sup>16</sup>was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; <sup>17</sup>nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

<sup>18</sup>Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. <sup>19</sup>But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord’s brother.

<sup>20</sup>(In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) <sup>21</sup>Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. <sup>22</sup>And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. <sup>23</sup>They only were hearing it said, “He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” <sup>24</sup>And they glorified God because of me.

**Writing**

Grace and peace—these two words embrace the whole of Christianity. Grace forgives sin, and peace stills the conscience. The two devils who plague us are sin and conscience, the power of the Law and the sting of sin (1 Cor. 15:56). But Christ has conquered these two monsters and trodden them underfoot, both in this age and in the age to come. The world does not know this; therefore it cannot teach anything sure about how to overcome sin, conscience, and death. Only Christians have this kind of teaching and are equipped and armed with it, so that they can overcome sin, despair, and eternal death. It is a teaching that is given only by

God; it does not proceed from free will, nor was it invented by human reason or wisdom.

These two words, “grace” and “peace,” contain a summary of all of Christianity. Grace contains the forgiveness of sins, a joyful peace, and a quiet conscience. But peace is impossible unless sin has first been forgiven, for the Law accuses and terrifies the conscience on account of sin. And the sin that the conscience feels cannot be removed by pilgrimages, vigils, labors, efforts, vows, or any other works; in fact, sin is increased by works. The more we work and sweat to extricate ourselves from sin, the worse off we are. For there is no way to remove sin except by grace. . . . Because the world does not understand this doctrine, it neither can nor will tolerate it. It brags about free will, about our powers, about our works—all these as means by which to earn and attain grace and peace, that is, the forgiveness of sins and a joyful conscience. But the conscience cannot be quiet and joyful unless it has peace through this grace, that is, through the forgiveness of sins promised in Christ. . . . Therefore your bones and mine will know no rest until we hear the Word of grace and cling to it firmly and faithfully.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

The Gospel shows the Father’s grace,  
Who sent His Son to save our race,  
Proclaims how Jesus lived and died  
That we might thus be justified.

—The Gospel Shows the Father’s Grace  
(*LSB* 580:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God of Truth, You converted the apostle Paul from persecutor of the Church to courageous preacher of the true Gospel that Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age. Deliver us from all false gospels, so that we remain faithful to Christ alone, whose death and resurrection are the source of our salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1055)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession XXVIII 61–78

## 13 JULY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> In you, O LORD, do I take | refuge,\*  
let me never be | put to shame!
- <sup>2</sup> In your righteousness deliver me  
and | rescue me;\*  
incline your ear to me, and | save me!
- <sup>3</sup> Be to me a rock of refuge, to which I may  
contin- | ually come,\*  
you have given the command to save me,  
for you are my rock and my | fortress.
- <sup>4</sup> Rescue me, O my God, from the hand  
of the | wicked,\*  
from the grasp of the unjust  
and | cruel man.
- <sup>5</sup> For you, O Lord, | are my hope,\*  
my trust, O LORD, | from my youth.
- <sup>6</sup> Upon you I have leaned from before  
my birth; you are he who took me  
from my | mother’s womb.\*  
My praise is continually | of you.
- <sup>7</sup> I have been as a portent to | many,\*  
but you are my strong | refuge.

<sup>8</sup>My mouth is filled | with your praise,\*  
and with your glory | all the day.

—Psalm 71:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 71*

### Old Testament Reading: Judges 13:1–25

The Birth of Samson

<sup>1</sup>And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

<sup>2</sup>There was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. And his wife was barren and had no children. <sup>3</sup>And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. <sup>4</sup>Therefore be careful and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, <sup>5</sup>for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.” <sup>6</sup>Then the woman came and told her husband, “A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome. I did not ask him where he was from, and he did not tell me his name, <sup>7</sup>but he said to me, ‘Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. So then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.’”

<sup>8</sup>Then Manoah prayed to the LORD and said, “O Lord, please let the man of God whom you sent come again to us and teach us what we are to do with the child who will be born.” <sup>9</sup>And God listened to the voice

of Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field. But Manoah her husband was not with her.

<sup>10</sup>So the woman ran quickly and told her husband, “Behold, the man who came to me the other day has appeared to me.” <sup>11</sup>And Manoah arose and went after his wife and came to the man and said to him, “Are you the man who spoke to this woman?” And he said, “I am.” <sup>12</sup>And Manoah said, “Now when your words come true, what is to be the child’s manner of life, and what is his mission?” <sup>13</sup>And the angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. <sup>14</sup>She may not eat of anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, or eat any unclean thing. All that I commanded her let her observe.”

<sup>5</sup>Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, “Please let us detain you and prepare a young goat for you.” <sup>16</sup>And the angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “If you detain me, I will not eat of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to the LORD.” (For Manoah did not know that he was the angel of the LORD.) <sup>17</sup>And Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, “What is your name, so that, when your words come true, we may honor you?” <sup>18</sup>And the angel of the LORD said to him, “Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?” <sup>19</sup>So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it on the rock to the LORD, to the one who works wonders, and Manoah and his wife were watching. <sup>20</sup>And when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the LORD went up in the flame of the altar. Now Manoah and his wife were watching, and they fell on their faces to the ground.

<sup>21</sup>The angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of the LORD. <sup>22</sup>And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, for we have seen God.” <sup>23</sup>But his wife said to him, “If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering at our hands, or shown us all these things, or now announced to us such things as these.” <sup>24</sup>And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the young man grew, and the LORD blessed him. <sup>25</sup>And the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

*Additional Reading: Ruth 1:1–4:22*

### **New Testament Reading: Galatians 2:1–21**

Paul Accepted by the Apostles

<sup>1</sup>Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. <sup>2</sup>I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. <sup>3</sup>But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. <sup>4</sup>Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—<sup>5</sup>to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. <sup>6</sup>And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say,

who seemed influential added nothing to me. <sup>7</sup>On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised <sup>8</sup>(for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), <sup>9</sup>and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. <sup>10</sup>Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Paul Opposes Peter

<sup>11</sup>But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup>For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. <sup>13</sup>And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup>But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

Justified by Faith

<sup>15</sup>We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup>yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

<sup>17</sup>But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! <sup>18</sup>For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. <sup>19</sup>For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. <sup>20</sup>I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. <sup>21</sup>I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

### Writing

Now the true meaning of Christianity is this: that a man first acknowledge, through the Law, that he is a sinner, for whom it is impossible to perform any good work. . . . 'For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin' (Rom. 14:23). Trying to merit grace by preceding works, therefore, is trying to placate God with sins, which is nothing but heaping sins upon sins, making fun of God, and provoking His wrath. When a man is taught this way by the Law, he is frightened and humbled. Then he really sees the greatness of his sin and finds in himself not one spark of the love of God; thus he justifies God in His Word and confesses that he deserves death and eternal damnation. Thus the first step in Christianity is the preaching of repentance and the knowledge of oneself.

The second step is this: If you want to be saved, your salvation does not come by works; but God has sent His only Son into the world that we might live through Him. He was crucified and died for you and bore your sins in His own body (1 Peter 2:24).

. . . For by His Word God has revealed to us that He wants to be a merciful Father to us. Without our merit—since, after all, we cannot merit anything—He wants to give us forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life for the sake of Christ. For God is He who dispenses His gifts freely to all, and this is the praise of His deity.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

But now I find sweet peace and rest;  
Despair no more reigns o'er me.  
No more am I by sin oppressed,  
For Christ has borne sin for me.  
Upon the cross for me He died  
That, reconciled, I might abide  
With You, my God, forever.

—If Your Beloved Son, O God  
(LSB 568:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O almighty God, merciful Father, who in love has joined us to the precious body of your Son, Jesus Christ, in the water of Holy Baptism. Grant that we may find peace and comfort in being incorruptible, even as He is incorruptible; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
(1056)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Augsburg Confession Conclusion

14 JULY

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup>Blessèd are those whose way is | blameless,\*  
who walk in the law | of the LORD!

<sup>2</sup>Blessèd are those who keep his  
testi- | monies,\*  
who seek him with their | whole heart,

<sup>3</sup>who also | do no wrong,\*  
but walk | in his ways!

<sup>4</sup>You have commanded your | precepts\*  
to be kept dil- | igently.

<sup>5</sup>Oh that my ways may be | steadfast\*  
in keeping your | statutes!

<sup>6</sup>Then I shall not be | put to shame,\*  
having my eyes fixed on all your  
com- | mandments.

<sup>7</sup>I will praise you with an | upright heart,\*  
when I learn your just and righ- | teous  
decrees.

<sup>8</sup>I will keep your | statutes,\*  
do not utterly for- | sake me!  
—Psalm 119:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 1*

**Old Testament Reading: Judges 14:1–20****Samson's Marriage**

<sup>1</sup>Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines. <sup>2</sup>Then he came up and told his father and mother, "I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife." <sup>3</sup>But his father and mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes."

<sup>4</sup>His father and mother did not know that it was from the LORD, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.

<sup>5</sup>Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and they came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion came toward him roaring. <sup>6</sup>Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. <sup>7</sup>Then he went down and talked with the woman, and she was right in Samson's eyes.

<sup>8</sup>After some days he returned to take her. And he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey. <sup>9</sup>He scraped it out into his hands and went on, eating as he went. And he came to his father and mother and gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey from the carcass of the lion.

<sup>10</sup>His father went down to the woman, and Samson prepared a feast there, for so the young men used to do. <sup>11</sup>As soon as the people saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him. <sup>12</sup>And Samson said to them, "Let me now put a riddle to you. If you can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes, <sup>13</sup>but if you cannot tell me what it is, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes." And they said to him, "Put your riddle, that we may hear it." <sup>14</sup>And he said to them,

"Out of the eater came something to eat.  
Out of the strong came something sweet."

And in three days they could not solve the riddle.

<sup>15</sup>On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us here to impoverish us?" <sup>16</sup>And Samson's wife wept over him and said, "You only hate me; you do not love me. You have put a riddle to my people, and you have not told me what it is." And he said to her, "Behold, I have not told my father nor my mother, and shall I tell you?" <sup>17</sup>She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her people. <sup>18</sup>And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

"What is sweeter than honey?  
What is stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,  
you would not have found out my riddle."

<sup>19</sup>And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of the town and took their spoil and gave the garments to those who had told the riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father's house. <sup>20</sup>And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

**New Testament Reading:  
Galatians 3:1-22**

By Faith, or by Works of the Law?

<sup>1</sup>O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. <sup>2</sup>Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the

Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? <sup>3</sup>Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? <sup>4</sup>Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? <sup>5</sup>Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—<sup>6</sup>just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?

<sup>7</sup>Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup>And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." <sup>9</sup>So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith

<sup>10</sup>For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." <sup>11</sup>Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." <sup>12</sup>But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." <sup>13</sup>Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—<sup>14</sup>so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

The Law and the Promise

<sup>15</sup>To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. <sup>16</sup>Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not

say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. <sup>17</sup>This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. <sup>18</sup>For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

<sup>19</sup>Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. <sup>20</sup>Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

<sup>21</sup>Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. <sup>22</sup>But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

## Writing

Therefore Christ not only was crucified and died, but by divine love sin was laid upon Him. When sin was laid upon Him, the Law came and said: “Let every sinner die! And therefore, Christ, if You want to reply that You are guilty and that You bear the punishment, you must bear the sin and the curse as well.” Therefore Paul correctly applies to Christ this general Law from Moses: “Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree.” Christ hung on a tree; therefore Christ is a curse of God.

And this is our highest comfort, to clothe and wrap Christ this way in my sins, your sins, and the sins of the entire world, and in this way to behold Him bearing all our sins. When He is beheld this way, He

easily removes all the fanatical opinions of our opponents about justification by works. For the papists dream about a kind of faith “formed by love.” Through this they want to remove sins and be justified. This is clearly to unwrap Christ and to uncliothe Him from our sins, to make Him innocent, to burden and overwhelm ourselves with our own sins, and to behold them, not in Christ but in ourselves. This is to abolish Christ and make Him useless. For if it is true that we abolish sins by the works of the Law and by love, then Christ does not take them away, but we do. But if He is truly the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, who became a curse for us, and who was wrapped in our sins, it necessarily follows that we cannot be justified and take away sins through love. For God has laid our sins, not upon us but upon Christ, His Son. If they are taken away by Him, then they cannot be taken away by us. All Scripture says this, and we confess and pray the same thing in the Creed when we say: “I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who suffered, was crucified, and died for us.”

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Salvation unto us has come  
By God’s free grace and favor;  
Good works cannot avert our doom,  
They help and save us never.  
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,  
Who did for all the world atone;  
He is our one Redeemer.

—Salvation Unto Us Has Come  
(*LSB* 555:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and merciful God, by Your gift alone Your faithful people render true and laudable service. Help us steadfastly to live in this life according to Your promises and finally attain Your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H72)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
Greeting 1–19

15 JULY

## Psalmody

- <sup>13</sup> The LORD looks down from | heaven;\*  
he sees all the chil- | dren of man;  
<sup>14</sup> from where he sits enthroned  
he | looks out\*  
on all the inhabitants | of the earth,  
<sup>15</sup> he who fashions the hearts | of them all\*  
and observes | all their deeds.  
<sup>16</sup> The king is not saved by his great | army;\*  
a warrior is not delivered  
by his | great strength.  
<sup>17</sup> The war horse is a false hope  
for sal- | vation,\*  
and by its great might it cannot | rescue.  
<sup>18</sup> Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those  
who | fear him,\*  
on those who hope in his | steadfast love,  
<sup>19</sup> that he may deliver their | soul from death\*  
and keep them alive in | famine.  
<sup>20</sup> Our soul waits | for the LORD;\*  
he is our help | and our shield.  
<sup>21</sup> For our heart is | glad in him,\*

because we trust in his | holy name.

- <sup>22</sup> Let your steadfast love, O LORD,  
be up- | on us,\*  
even as we | hope in you.  
—Psalm 33:13–22

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 27*

## Old Testament Reading: Judges 15:1–16:3

Samson Defeats the Philistines

<sup>1</sup>After some days, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife with a young goat. And he said, “I will go in to my wife in the chamber.” But her father would not allow him to go in. <sup>2</sup>And her father said, “I really thought that you utterly hated her, so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please take her instead.” <sup>3</sup>And Samson said to them, “This time I shall be innocent in regard to the Philistines, when I do them harm.” <sup>4</sup>So Samson went and caught 300 foxes and took torches. And he turned them tail to tail and put a torch between each pair of tails. <sup>5</sup>And when he had set fire to the torches, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines and set fire to the stacked grain and the standing grain, as well as the olive orchards. <sup>6</sup>Then the Philistines said, “Who has done this?” And they said, “Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion.” And the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. <sup>7</sup>And Samson said to them, “If this is what you do, I swear I will be avenged on you, and after that I will quit.” <sup>8</sup>And he struck them hip and thigh with a great blow, and he went down and stayed in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

<sup>9</sup>Then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah and made a raid on Lehi. <sup>10</sup>And the men of Judah said, “Why have you come up against us?” They said, “We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he did to us.” <sup>11</sup>Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, “Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?” And he said to them, “As they did to me, so have I done to them.” <sup>12</sup>And they said to him, “We have come down to bind you, that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines.” And Samson said to them, “Swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves.” <sup>13</sup>They said to him, “No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands. We will surely not kill you.” So they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

<sup>14</sup>When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. <sup>15</sup>And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men. <sup>16</sup>And Samson said,

“With the jawbone of a donkey,  
heaps upon heaps,  
with the jawbone of a donkey  
have I struck down a thousand men.”

<sup>17</sup>As soon as he had finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone out of his hand. And that place was called Ramath-lehi.

<sup>18</sup>And he was very thirsty, and he called upon the LORD and said, “You have granted this great salvation by the hand of your servant, and shall I now die of thirst and

fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?”

<sup>19</sup>And God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi, and water came out from it. And when he drank, his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore the name of it was called En-hakkore; it is at Lehi to this day. <sup>20</sup>And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

Samson and Delilah

<sup>16:1</sup>Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a prostitute, and he went in to her. <sup>2</sup>The Gazites were told, “Samson has come here.” And they surrounded the place and set an ambush for him all night at the gate of the city. They kept quiet all night, saying, “Let us wait till the light of the morning; then we will kill him.” <sup>3</sup>But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is in front of Hebron.

### New Testament Reading: Galatians 3:23–4:11

[The Law and the Promise]

<sup>23</sup>Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>24</sup>So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup>But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup>for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup>For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>And if you are Christ’s, then

you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.

Sons and Heirs

<sup>4</sup>I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, <sup>2</sup>but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. <sup>3</sup>In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. <sup>4</sup>But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup>And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Paul’s Concern for the Galatians

<sup>8</sup>Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. <sup>9</sup>But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

<sup>10</sup>You observe days and months and seasons and years! <sup>11</sup>I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

Writing

But in what manner or way has Christ redeemed us? The manner was as follows: He was born under the Law. When Christ came, He found us all captive under guardians and trustees, that is, confined and constrained under the Law. What did He do? He Himself is Lord of the Law; therefore the Law has no jurisdiction over Him and cannot accuse Him, because He is the Son of God.

He who was not under the Law subjected Himself voluntarily to the Law. The Law did everything to Him that it did to us. It accused us and terrified us. It subjected us to sin, death, and the wrath of God; and it condemned us with its judgment. And it had a right to do all this, for we have all sinned. But Christ “committed no sin, and no guile was found on His lips” (1 Peter 2:22). Therefore he owed nothing to the Law. And yet against Him—so holy, righteous, and blessed—the Law raged as much as it does against us accursed and condemned sinners, and even more fiercely. It accused Him of blasphemy and sedition; it found Him guilty in the sight of God of all the sins of the entire world; finally it so saddened and frightened Him that He sweat blood (Luke 22:44); and eventually it sentenced Him to death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:8). . . . Therefore we believers are free of the Law through Christ, who “triumphed over it in Him” (Col. 2:15). This glorious triumph, accomplished for us through Christ, is grasped not by works but by faith alone. Therefore faith alone justifies.

—Martin Luther

Hymnody

O hear and mark the message well,  
 For God Himself has spoken.  
 Let faith, not doubt, among us dwell  
 And so receive this token.  
 Our Lord here with His Word endows  
 Pure water, freely flowing.  
 God’s Holy Spirit here avows  
 Our kinship while bestowing  
 The Baptism of His blessing.

—To Jordan Came the Christ,  
 Our Lord (LSB 406:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, You came in humility and weakness to defeat the powers of sin, death, and the devil. Clothe our weakness with Your righteousness by Your baptismal grace that we might withstand the power of every adversary; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1057)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
I–II (I) 1–4

**16 JULY**

*Ruth*

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, in your strength the king re- | joices,\*  
and in your salvation how greatly | he exults!

<sup>2</sup> You have given him his | heart's desire\*  
and have not withheld the request | of his lips.

<sup>3</sup> For you meet him with rich | blessings;\*  
you set a crown of fine gold up- | on his head.

<sup>4</sup> He asked life of you; you gave | it to him,\*  
length of days forever and | ever.

<sup>5</sup> His glory is great through your sal- | vation,\*  
splendor and majesty you be- | stow on him.

<sup>6</sup> For you make him most blessed for- | ever;\*  
you make him glad with the joy of your | presence.

<sup>7</sup> For the king trusts | in the LORD,\*  
and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall | not be moved.  
—Psalm 21:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 21*

## Old Testament Reading: Judges 16:4–30

[Samson and Delilah]

<sup>4</sup>After this he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. <sup>5</sup>And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver.” <sup>6</sup>So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you.”

<sup>7</sup>Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.” <sup>8</sup>Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. <sup>9</sup>Now she had men lying in ambush in an inner chamber. And she said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he snapped the bowstrings, as a thread of flax snaps when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

<sup>10</sup>Then Delilah said to Samson, “Behold, you have mocked me and told me lies. Please tell me how you might be bound.” <sup>11</sup>And he said to her, “If they bind me with new ropes that have not been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

<sup>12</sup>So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, “The Philistines

are upon you, Samson!” And the men lying in ambush were in an inner chamber. But he snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.

<sup>13</sup>Then Delilah said to Samson, “Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me how you might be bound.” And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and fasten it tight with the pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.” <sup>14</sup>So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head and wove them into the web. And she made them tight with the pin and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he awoke from his sleep and pulled away the pin, the loom, and the web.

<sup>15</sup>And she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me where your great strength lies.” <sup>16</sup>And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death. <sup>17</sup>And he told her all his heart, and said to her, “A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

<sup>18</sup>When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up again, for he has told me all his heart.” Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands. <sup>19</sup>She made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. <sup>20</sup>And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out

as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the LORD had left him. <sup>21</sup>And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. And he ground at the mill in the prison. <sup>22</sup>But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

#### The Death of Samson

<sup>23</sup>Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to rejoice, and they said, “Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand.” <sup>24</sup>And when the people saw him, they praised their god. For they said, “Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has killed many of us.” <sup>25</sup>And when their hearts were merry, they said, “Call Samson, that he may entertain us.” So they called Samson out of the prison, and he entertained them. They made him stand between the pillars. <sup>26</sup>And Samson said to the young man who held him by the hand, “Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them.” <sup>27</sup>Now the house was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about 3,000 men and women, who looked on while Samson entertained.

<sup>28</sup>Then Samson called to the LORD and said, “O Lord GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes.” <sup>29</sup>And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. <sup>30</sup>And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines.” Then he bowed with all his

strength, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life.

*Additional Reading: Judges 17:1–21:25*

### New Testament Reading: Galatians 4:12–31

[Paul's Concern for the Galatians]

<sup>12</sup>Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. <sup>13</sup>You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, <sup>14</sup>and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>What then has become of the blessing you felt? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. <sup>16</sup>Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? <sup>17</sup>They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. <sup>18</sup>It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, <sup>19</sup>my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! <sup>20</sup>I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

Example of Hagar and Sarah

<sup>21</sup>Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? <sup>22</sup>For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. <sup>23</sup>But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman

was born through promise. <sup>24</sup>Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. <sup>25</sup>Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. <sup>26</sup>But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. <sup>27</sup>For it is written,

“Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;  
break forth and cry aloud,  
you who are not in labor!  
For the children of the desolate  
one will be more  
than those of the one  
who has a husband.”

<sup>28</sup>Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. <sup>29</sup>But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. <sup>30</sup>But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.” <sup>31</sup>So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.

### Writing

Heavenly Father, we have certainly deserved Your punishment. You may surely use the devil, pope, or Muslims as Your rod of anger against us. But they want us, together with themselves, to sin atrociously against You. For they are not concerned whether we have disobeyed or slandered You or indulged in all kinds of idolatry and immorality as they do. However, our sin against them is that we preach, believe, and profess You, God Father, Your Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one and right eternal God.

But, where we have denied You, the devil, world, pope, and Muslims would leave us in peace, as Your dear Son says: “If you were of the world, so the world would love you” (John 15:19).

Do look on us, merciful Father and Judge of our enemies! For they are really Your enemies, and if they persecute and attack us, so persecute and attack them Yourself. For the Word that we preach, believe, and profess is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Muslims want to set their Muhammad in the place of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ. They slander Him and say that He is no real God and Muhammad is greater and better than He is. If it is sin that we hold You, the Father, Your Son, and the Holy Spirit to be the right and only God, and so confess and praise You, then You would Yourself be the sinner who calls us to that. When they therefore hate, attack, and punish us, they do this to You.

Therefore, awake, dear Lord God, and sanctify Your name that they defame; strengthen Your kingdom that they would destroy in us; and accomplish Your will that they would suppress in us. Let Yourself not be trodden underfoot because of our sin by those who want to annihilate in us Your holy Word, name, and work, so that You would be no God and have no people who proclaim, believe, and profess You.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;  
 My soul, believe and doubt it not.  
 Why stagger at this word of promise?  
 Has Scripture ever falsehood taught?  
 No! Then this word must true remain:  
 By grace you too will life obtain.

—By Grace I'm Saved (*LSB* 566:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Faithful God, You promised to preserve Your people and save Your inheritance, using unlikely and unexpected vessels in extending the genealogy that would bring about the birth of Your blessed Son. Give us the loyalty of Ruth and her trust in the one true God, that we, too, might honor You through our submission and respect and be counted among Your chosen people, by the grace of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, who reign together with You, now and forever. (1053)

## Ruth

Ruth of Moab, the subject of the biblical book that bears her name, is an inspiring example of God's grace. Although she was a Gentile, God made her the great-grandmother of King David (Ruth 4:17) and an ancestress of Jesus Himself (Matthew 1:5). A famine in Israel led Elimelech and Naomi of Bethlehem to immigrate to the neighboring nation of Moab with their two sons. The sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth, but after about ten years, Elimelech and his sons died (Ruth 1:1–5). Naomi then decided to return to Bethlehem and urged her daughters-in-law to return to their families. Orpah listened to Naomi's advice, but Ruth refused, replying with the

stirring words, “Where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16). After Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, Boaz, a close relative of Elimelech, agreed to be Ruth’s “redeemer” (Ruth 3:7–13; 4:9–12). He took her as his wife, and Ruth gave birth to Obed, the grandfather of David (Ruth 4:13–17), thus preserving the messianic line. Ruth’s kindness and selfless loyalty toward Naomi and her faith in Naomi’s God have long endeared her to the faithful and redounded to God’s praise for His merciful choice of one so unexpected.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
II (I) 5–22

17 JULY

### Psalmody

- <sup>8</sup> But you, | O LORD,\*  
are on high for- | ever.
- <sup>9</sup> For behold, your enemies, O LORD, for  
behold, your enemies shall | perish;\*  
all evildoers shall be | scattered.
- <sup>10</sup> But you have exalted my horn  
like that of the | wild ox;\*  
you have poured over me | fresh oil.
- <sup>11</sup> My eyes have seen the downfall  
of my | enemies;\*  
my ears have heard the doom  
of my evil as- | sailants.
- <sup>12</sup> The righteous flourish like the | palm tree\*  
and grow like a cedar in | Lebanon.
- <sup>13</sup> They are planted in the house | of  
the LORD;\*

they flourish in the courts | of our God.

- <sup>14</sup> They still bear fruit in | old age;\*  
they are ever full of | sap and green,  
<sup>15</sup> to declare that the LORD is | upright;\*  
he is my rock, and there is no  
unrighteousness | in him.  
—Psalm 92:8–15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 92*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 1:1–20

The Birth of Samuel

<sup>1</sup>There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. <sup>2</sup>He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

<sup>3</sup>Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. <sup>4</sup>On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup>But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. <sup>6</sup>And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. <sup>7</sup>So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. <sup>8</sup>And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?”

<sup>9</sup>After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest

was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. <sup>10</sup>She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. <sup>11</sup>And she vowed a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”

<sup>12</sup>As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. <sup>13</sup>Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. <sup>14</sup>And Eli said to her, “How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.”

<sup>15</sup>But Hannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. <sup>16</sup>Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation.” <sup>17</sup>Then Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.” <sup>18</sup>And she said, “Let your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

<sup>19</sup>They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. <sup>20</sup>And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the LORD.”

## New Testament Reading: Galatians 5:1–26

Christ Has Set Us Free

<sup>1</sup>For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

<sup>2</sup>Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. <sup>3</sup>I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. <sup>4</sup>You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. <sup>5</sup>For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. <sup>6</sup>For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

<sup>7</sup>You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? <sup>8</sup>This persuasion is not from him who calls you. <sup>9</sup>A little leaven leavens the whole lump. <sup>10</sup>I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view than mine, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. <sup>11</sup>But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. <sup>12</sup>I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!

<sup>13</sup>For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup>For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>15</sup>But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

**Walk by the Spirit**

<sup>16</sup>But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. <sup>17</sup>For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. <sup>18</sup>But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. <sup>19</sup>Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, <sup>21</sup>envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup>And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

<sup>25</sup>If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. <sup>26</sup>Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

**Writing**

This is the freedom and the slavery of which Paul speaks in Rom. 6:20, 22: “When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But now that you have been set free from sin, you have become slaves of God.” But let us set this up in a diagram:

Freedom from righteousness	}	{	Service of sin
Service of righteousness	}		Freedom from sin

For he who is free from sin has become a slave of righteousness; but he who is the slave of sin is free from righteousness, and vice versa. . . . “Christ,” he says, “has made

us free with this freedom.” It is a spiritual freedom, one to be preserved in the spirit. It is not that heathen kind, which even the pagan Persius knew was not enough. It is freedom from the Law, but in a way contrary to what usually takes place among men. For it is human freedom when laws are changed without effecting any change in men, but it is Christian freedom when men are changed without changing the Law. Consequently, the same Law that was formerly hateful to the free will now becomes delightful, since love is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). In this freedom, he teaches us, we must stand strongly and steadfastly, because Christ, who fulfills the Law and overcomes sin for us, sends the spirit of love into the hearts of those who believe in Him. This makes them righteous and lovers of the Law, not because of their own works but freely because it is freely bestowed by Christ.

—Martin Luther

**Hymnody**

All are redeemed, both far and wide,  
 Since Thou, O Lord, for all hast died.  
 Grant us the will and grace provide  
 To love them all in Thee!

—O God of Mercy, God of Might  
 (LSB 852:4)

**Prayer of the Day**

Merciful God, for freedom You have set us free through Christ’s liberating death and resurrection. In this freedom, teach us to live in the fruit of the Spirit given us in our Baptism that we may bear in our bodies the fulfillment of the Law as we love our neighbors as ourselves; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1059)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
II (I) 23–34

18 JULY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> May the LORD answer you  
in the day of | trouble!\*
- May the name of the God  
    of Jacob pro- | tect you!
- <sup>2</sup> May he send you help from  
the sanctu- | ary\*
- and give you support from | Zion!
- <sup>3</sup> May he remember all your | offerings\*  
and regard with favor your  
burnt sacri- | fices!
- <sup>4</sup> May he grant you your | heart's desire\*  
and fulfill | all your plans!
- <sup>5</sup> May we shout for joy over your salvation,  
and in the name of our God  
set up our | banners!\*
- May the LORD fulfill  
    all your pe- | titions!
- <sup>6</sup> Now I know that the LORD  
saves his a- | nointed;\*
- he will answer him from his holy heaven  
    with the saving might of his | right hand.
- <sup>7</sup> Some trust in chariots and some in | horses,\*  
but we trust in the name  
of the | LORD our God.
- <sup>8</sup> They col- | lapse and fall,\*  
but we rise and | stand upright.
- <sup>9</sup> O LORD, | save the king!\*
- May he answer us | when we call.
- Psalm 20

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 131*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 1:21–2:17

Samuel Given to the Lord

<sup>21</sup>The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. <sup>22</sup>But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever.” <sup>23</sup>Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. <sup>24</sup>And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young. <sup>25</sup>Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. <sup>26</sup>And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. <sup>27</sup>For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. <sup>28</sup>Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.”

And he worshiped the LORD there.

Hannah's Prayer

<sup>2:1</sup> And Hannah prayed and said,  
“My heart exults in the LORD;  
my strength is exalted in the LORD.  
My mouth derides my enemies,  
because I rejoice in your salvation.

<sup>2</sup>“There is none holy like the LORD;  
there is none besides you;  
there is no rock like our God.

<sup>3</sup>Talk no more so very proudly,

let not arrogance come  
 from your mouth;  
 for the LORD is a God of knowledge,  
 and by him actions are weighed.  
<sup>4</sup>The bows of the mighty are broken,  
 but the feeble bind on strength.  
<sup>5</sup>Those who were full have hired  
 themselves out for bread,  
 but those who were hungry have  
 ceased to hunger.  
 The barren has borne seven,  
 but she who has many children  
 is forlorn.  
<sup>6</sup>The LORD kills and brings to life;  
 he brings down to Sheol  
 and raises up.  
<sup>7</sup>The LORD makes poor and makes rich;  
 he brings low and he exalts.  
<sup>8</sup>He raises up the poor from the dust;  
 he lifts the needy from the ash heap  
 to make them sit with princes  
 and inherit a seat of honor.  
 For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's,  
 and on them he has set the world.  
<sup>9</sup>"He will guard the feet  
 of his faithful ones,  
 but the wicked shall be cut off  
 in darkness,  
 for not by might shall a man prevail.  
<sup>10</sup>The adversaries of the LORD shall be  
 broken to pieces;  
 against them he will thunder  
 in heaven.  
 The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;  
 he will give strength to his king  
 and exalt the power of his anointed."  
<sup>11</sup>Then Elkanah went home to Ramah.  
 And the boy ministered to the LORD in the  
 presence of Eli the priest.

#### Eli's Worthless Sons

<sup>12</sup>Now the sons of Eli were worthless men.  
 They did not know the LORD. <sup>13</sup>The custom  
 of the priests with the people was that when  
 any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant  
 would come, while the meat was boiling,  
 with a three-pronged fork in his hand, <sup>14</sup>and  
 he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or  
 cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought  
 up the priest would take for himself. This is  
 what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites  
 who came there. <sup>15</sup>Moreover, before the fat  
 was burned, the priest's servant would come  
 and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give  
 meat for the priest to roast, for he will not  
 accept boiled meat from you but only raw."  
<sup>16</sup>And if the man said to him, "Let them burn  
 the fat first, and then take as much as you  
 wish," he would say, "No, you must give it  
 now, and if not, I will take it by force." <sup>17</sup>Thus  
 the sin of the young men was very great in  
 the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the  
 offering of the LORD with contempt.

#### New Testament Reading: Galatians 6:1–16

##### Bear One Another's Burdens

<sup>1</sup>Brothers, if anyone is caught in any  
 transgression, you who are spiritual should  
 restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep  
 watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.  
<sup>2</sup>Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill  
 the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup>For if anyone thinks he is  
 something, when he is nothing, he deceives  
 himself. <sup>4</sup>But let each one test his own work,  
 and then his reason to boast will be in  
 himself alone and not in his neighbor. <sup>5</sup>For  
 each will have to bear his own load.  
<sup>6</sup>One who is taught the word must share  
 all good things with the one who teaches.  
<sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for

whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

<sup>8</sup>For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup>And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup>So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Final Warning and Benediction

<sup>11</sup>See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. <sup>12</sup>It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. <sup>13</sup>For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. <sup>14</sup>But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. <sup>15</sup>For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. <sup>16</sup>And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

**Writing**

Thus everywhere love finds something to bear, something to do. Moreover, love is the law of Christ. But to love means to wish from the heart what is good for the other person, or to seek the other person's advantage. Now if there were no one who errs or falls—that is, no one who needs what is good—whom are you going to love, whose good are you going to desire, whose good are you going to seek? . . .

“Let us do good to all men,” to heathen, Jews, the thankful, the unthankful, friends, enemies, neighbors, strangers. In short, just as is said of love, no person is regarded. Behold, how great the breadth of Christian benevolence is! For it must be all-encompassing, as Christ also says in Matt. 5:46: “If you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do this?” Nevertheless, Paul gives precedence to those who are of the household of faith, because we have been bound to them with a closer tie, inasmuch as they are from the same house, the church, and from the same household of Christ, and have one faith, one Baptism, one hope, one Lord, and everything the same.

—Martin Luther

**Hymnody**

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
 Save in the death of Christ, my God;  
 All the vain things that charm me most,  
 I sacrifice them to His blood.

—When I Survey the Wondrous Cross  
 (LSB 426:2)

**Prayer of the Day**

O Lord, keep Your household, the Church, in continual godliness that through Your protection she may be free from all adversities and devoutly given to serve You in good works; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H81)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
II (I) 35–51

19 JULY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> God has taken his place  
in the divine | council;\*  
in the midst of the gods  
he holds | judgment:
- <sup>2</sup> “How long will you judge un- | justly\*  
and show partiality to the | wicked?”
- <sup>3</sup> Give justice to the weak and  
the | fatherless;\*  
maintain the right of the afflicted  
and the | destitute.
- <sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and the | needy;\*  
deliver them from the hand  
of the | wicked.”
- <sup>5</sup> They have neither knowledge nor  
understanding, they walk about  
in | darkness;\*  
all the foundations of the earth  
are | shaken.
- <sup>6</sup> I said, | “You are gods,\*  
sons of the Most High, | all of you;
- <sup>7</sup> nevertheless, like men | you shall die,\*  
and fall like | any prince.”
- <sup>8</sup> Arise, O God, | judge the earth;\*  
for you shall inherit all the | nations!  
—Psalm 82

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 136*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 2:18–36

[Eli’s Worthless Sons]

<sup>18</sup>Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. <sup>19</sup>And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. <sup>20</sup>Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the LORD give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the LORD.” So then they would return to their home.

<sup>21</sup>Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the young man Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.

Eli Rebukes His Sons

<sup>22</sup>Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. <sup>23</sup>And he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. <sup>24</sup>No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. <sup>25</sup>If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?” But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.

<sup>26</sup>Now the young man Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.

The Lord Rejects Eli’s Household

<sup>27</sup>And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, “Thus the LORD has said, ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the

house of Pharaoh? <sup>28</sup>Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. <sup>29</sup>Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel? <sup>30</sup>Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. <sup>31</sup>Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. <sup>32</sup>Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. <sup>33</sup>The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. <sup>34</sup>And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. <sup>35</sup>And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. <sup>36</sup>And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, "Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread." ' ' "

## New Testament Reading: Acts 15:22–41

The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers

<sup>22</sup>Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, <sup>23</sup>with the following letter: "The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. <sup>24</sup>Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, <sup>25</sup>it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, <sup>26</sup>men who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>27</sup>We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. <sup>28</sup>For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: <sup>29</sup>that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."

<sup>30</sup>So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. <sup>31</sup>And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. <sup>32</sup>And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. <sup>33</sup>And after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. <sup>35</sup>But Paul and Barnabas remained in

Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

#### Paul and Barnabas Separate

<sup>36</sup>And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” <sup>37</sup>Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. <sup>38</sup>But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. <sup>39</sup>And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, <sup>40</sup>but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. <sup>41</sup>And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

#### Writing

[Christ’s wonderful purpose] was nothing less than the unification of mankind in one common brotherhood of life and salvation. When He came, there was no common bond of union among men. The populations of the earth were widely separated and estranged by endless differences of race, nationality, interest, and civilization. . . . The world was a babel of notions, beliefs, and unbeliefs, and all attempts to reach any settled truth had proved so futile that many only sneered at talk about it and contemptuously asked, “What is truth?” . . . But when Christ came as the embodied truth of God and set Himself to work among men, it was to lay a sure foundation for all humanity to rest on and to create a common center of unity for the whole race. “One Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all,” were the principles

He enunciated for the acceptance of all the children of men and which, in all reason and conscience, should command every heart. By the acceptance of these immutable truths He meant to create a bond of common interest, fellowship, and hope between Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female, uniting all nationalities, races, and classes in one grand commonwealth with one Head and Spirit.

—Joseph A. Seiss

#### Hymnody

Spread the reign of God the Lord,  
Spoken, written, mighty Word;  
Ev’rywhere His creatures call  
To His heav’nly banquet hall.

—Spread the Reign of God the Lord  
(*LSB* 830:1)

#### Prayer of the Day

Our Lord Jesus, Your yoke is easy and Your burden is light. Keep us from becoming burdened by laws fulfilled in You, and help us to live lives sanctified by Your Spirit that we might bear witness that in You all things have been made new; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1060)

#### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession III–IV  
(II) 1–11

## 20 JULY

*Elijah***Psalmody**

- <sup>57</sup>The LORD is my | portion;\*  
I promise to | keep your words.
- <sup>58</sup>I entreat your favor with | all my heart;\*  
be gracious to me according  
to your | promise.
- <sup>59</sup>When I think | on my ways,\*  
I turn my feet to your testi- | monies;
- <sup>60</sup>I hasten and do | not delay\*  
to keep your com- | mandments.
- <sup>61</sup>Though the cords of the wicked  
en- | snare me,\*  
I do not for- | get your law.
- <sup>62</sup>At midnight I rise to | praise you,\*  
because of your just and  
righ- | teous decrees.
- <sup>63</sup>I am a companion of all who | fear you,\*  
of those who keep your | precepts.
- <sup>64</sup>The earth, O LORD, is full  
of your | steadfast love;\*  
teach me your | statutes!  
—Psalm 119:57–64

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 115:9–18***Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1–21**

The Lord Calls Samuel

<sup>1</sup>Now the young man Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

<sup>2</sup>At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. <sup>3</sup>The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!” <sup>5</sup>and ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down.

<sup>6</sup>And the LORD called again, “Samuel!” and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” <sup>7</sup>Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

<sup>8</sup>And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the young man. <sup>9</sup>Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

<sup>10</sup>And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” <sup>11</sup>Then the LORD said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. <sup>12</sup>On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup>And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. <sup>14</sup>Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.”

<sup>15</sup>Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. <sup>16</sup>But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.”

<sup>17</sup>And Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” <sup>18</sup>So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him.”

<sup>19</sup>And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup>And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

## New Testament Reading: Acts 16:1–22

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

<sup>1</sup>Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. <sup>2</sup>He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. <sup>3</sup>Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. <sup>4</sup>As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup>So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

The Macedonian Call

<sup>6</sup>And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. <sup>7</sup>And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. <sup>8</sup>So, passing

by Mysia, they went down to Troas. <sup>9</sup>And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” <sup>10</sup>And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

The Conversion of Lydia

<sup>11</sup>So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, <sup>12</sup>and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. <sup>13</sup>And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. <sup>14</sup>One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup>And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.

Paul and Silas in Prison

<sup>16</sup>As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup>She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” <sup>18</sup>And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ

to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.

<sup>19</sup>But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. <sup>20</sup>And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. <sup>21</sup>They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” <sup>22</sup>The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods.

### Writing

In this way, too, the Holy Scriptures do not credit the human powers of the natural free will with conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal, and all that belongs to their effective beginning and end. They do not credit free will the whole way, half way, or in any way, even in the smallest or most trivial way. They credit conversion solely and completely to the Holy Spirit’s divine work, as also the Apology teaches.

Reason and free will are able to live an outwardly decent life to a certain extent. But only the Holy Spirit causes a person to be born anew [John 3:5] and to have inwardly another heart, mind, and natural desire. He opens the mind and heart to understand the Scriptures and to listen to the Word, as it is written in Luke 24:45, “Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”

One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

(Acts 16:14)

For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13)

God exalted Him at His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:31)

God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth. (2 Timothy 2:25)

For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake. (Philippians 1:29)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)

Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” (John 6:29)

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 25–26

### Hymnody

Spirit of life, of love and peace,  
Unite our hearts, our joy increase,  
Thy gracious help supply.  
To each of us the blessing give  
In Christian fellowship to live,  
In joyful hope to die.

—May We Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfill  
(LSB 698:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, through the prophet Elijah, You continued the prophetic

pattern of teaching Your people the true faith and demonstrating through miracles Your presence in creation to heal it of its brokenness. Grant that Your Church may see in Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the final end-times prophet whose teaching and miracles continue in Your Church through the healing medicine of the Gospel and the Sacraments; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1061)

### Elijah

The prophet Elijah, whose name means “My God is Yahweh [the LORD],” prophesied in the northern kingdom of Israel primarily during the reign of Ahab (874–853 BC). Ahab, under the influence of his pagan wife Jezebel, had encouraged the worship of Baal throughout his kingdom, even as Jezebel sought to get rid of the worship of Yahweh. Elijah was called by God to denounce this idolatry and to call the people of Israel back to the worship of Yahweh as the only true God (as he did in 1 Kings 18:20–40). Elijah was a rugged and imposing figure, living in the wilderness and dressing in a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt (2 Kings 1:8). He was a prophet mighty in word and deed. Many miracles were done through Elijah, including the raising of the dead (1 Kings 17:17–24), and the effecting of a long drought in Israel (1 Kings 17:1). At the end of his ministry, he was taken up into heaven while Elisha, his successor, looked on (2 Kings 2:11). Later, the prophet Malachi proclaimed that Elijah would return before the coming of the Messiah (Malachi 4:5–6), a prophecy that was fulfilled in the prophetic ministry of John the Baptist (Matthew 11:14).

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
IV (II) 12–21

## 21 JULY

*Ezekiel*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for | he is good,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!
- <sup>2</sup> Who can utter the mighty deeds | of the LORD,\*  
or declare | all his praise?
- <sup>3</sup> Blessèd are they who observe | justice,\*  
who do righteousness | at all times!
- <sup>4</sup> Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your | people;\*  
help me when you | save them,
- <sup>5</sup> that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your | nation,\*  
that I may glory with your in- | heritance.  
—Psalm 106:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 106*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 4:1–22

The Philistines Capture the Ark

<sup>1</sup> And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. They encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek. <sup>2</sup>The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle. <sup>3</sup>And

when the troops came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, “Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that it may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies.”<sup>4</sup> So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

<sup>5</sup>As soon as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded. <sup>6</sup>And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, “What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?” And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp, <sup>7</sup>the Philistines were afraid, for they said, “A god has come into the camp.” And they said, “Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. <sup>8</sup>Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness. <sup>9</sup>Take courage, and be men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you; be men and fight.”

<sup>10</sup>So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. <sup>11</sup>And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

#### The Death of Eli

<sup>12</sup>A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head.

<sup>13</sup>When he arrived, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out. <sup>14</sup>When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, “What is this uproar?” Then the man hurried and came and told Eli. <sup>15</sup>Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were set so that he could not see. <sup>16</sup>And the man said to Eli, “I am he who has come from the battle; I fled from the battle today.” And he said, “How did it go, my son?” <sup>17</sup>He who brought the news answered and said, “Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great defeat among the people. Your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.” <sup>18</sup>As soon as he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

<sup>19</sup>Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, about to give birth. And when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed and gave birth, for her pains came upon her. <sup>20</sup>And about the time of her death the women attending her said to her, “Do not be afraid, for you have borne a son.” But she did not answer or pay attention. <sup>21</sup>And she named the child Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel!” because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. <sup>22</sup>And she said, “The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.”

**New Testament Reading: Acts 16:23–40**

[Paul and Silas in Prison]

<sup>23</sup>And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. <sup>24</sup>Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

The Philippian Jailer Converted

<sup>25</sup>About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, <sup>26</sup>and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

<sup>27</sup>When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup>But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." <sup>29</sup>And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup>Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup>And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." <sup>32</sup>And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup>And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

<sup>34</sup>Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

<sup>35</sup>But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go."

<sup>36</sup>And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you

go. Therefore come out now and go in peace."

<sup>37</sup>But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly?

No! Let them come themselves and take us out." <sup>38</sup>The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens.

<sup>39</sup>So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. <sup>40</sup>So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

*Additional Reading: Acts 17:1–34***Writing**

Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, from the line of Aaron, was a priest and prophet. In the year of the world 3350, in the sixth year before the fall of Jerusalem, he was divinely inspired in Babylon to console and strengthen the Jews, who five years previously, at the urging of Jeremiah and of their own free will, had given themselves with King Jehoiakim or Jeconiah to King Nebuchadnezzar and had migrated to Babylon. These people, seeing that the destruction of Jerusalem was delayed for five full years, were thinking that the predictions of Jeremiah were in vain, and they were regretting that they had voluntarily left their fatherland. Therefore Ezekiel predicted that Jerusalem would surely be overturned, even if the punishment were delayed for a while. At the same time, he also promised the liberation and return from Babylon (ch. 11). In the year of the world 3358, the third year of Jeconiah's migration, Ezekiel was called to his ministry

by a unique rite and divine testimony (chs. 1–3). The vision of the four wheels and living creatures (chs. 1 and 10) signifies the chariot of Christ, in which, through the ministry of the Gospel, with the breath of the Holy Spirit and the fiery tongues of the apostles, He is conveyed into all the world. . . . In the year of the world 3378, the twenty-fifth year of Jeconiah’s migration, Ezekiel described the building of the spiritual Jerusalem, or of the ministry of the Church of Christ, from the fortieth chapter until the end.

—David Chytraeus

### Hymnody

“Though he will shed My precious blood,  
Me of My life bereaving,  
All this I suffer for your good;  
Be steadfast and believing.  
Life will from death the vict’ry win;  
My innocence shall bear your sin,  
And you are blest forever.”

—Dear Christians, One and All,  
Rejoice (*LSB* 556:8)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, through the prophet Ezekiel, You continued the prophetic pattern of teaching Your people the true faith and demonstrating through miracles Your presence in creation to heal it of its brokenness. Grant that Your Church may see in Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the final end-times prophet whose teaching and miracles continue in Your Church through the healing medicine of the Gospel and the Sacraments; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1062)

### Ezekiel

Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, was a priest called by God to be a prophet to the exiles during the Babylonian captivity (Ezekiel 1:3). In 597 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army brought the king of Judah and thousands of the best citizens of Jerusalem—including Ezekiel—to Babylon (2 Kings 24:8–16). Ezekiel’s priestly background profoundly stamped his prophecy, as the holiness of God and the temple figure prominently in his messages (for example, Ezekiel 9–10 and 40–48). From 593 BC to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BC, Ezekiel prophesied the inevitability of divine judgment on Jerusalem, on the exiles in Babylon, and on seven nations that surrounded Israel (Ezekiel 1–32). Jerusalem would fall, and the exiles would not quickly return, as a just consequence of their sin. Once word reached Ezekiel that Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, his message became one of comfort and hope. Through him, God promised that His people would experience future restoration, renewal, and revival in the coming messianic kingdom (Ezekiel 33–48). Much of the strange symbolism of Ezekiel’s prophecies was later employed in the Revelation to St. John.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (II) 22–35

## 22 JULY

*St. Mary Magdalene*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> By the waters of Babylon,  
there we sat | down and wept,\*  
when we remembered | Zion.
- <sup>2</sup> On the | willows there\*  
we hung | up our lyres.
- <sup>3</sup> For there our captors required of us songs,  
and our tormentors, mirth, | saying,\*  
“Sing us one of the songs of | Zion!”
- <sup>4</sup> How shall we sing the | LORD’s song\*  
in a | foreign land?
- <sup>5</sup> If I forget you, O Je- | rusalem,\*  
let my right hand for- | get its skill!
- <sup>6</sup> Let my tongue stick to the roof of my  
mouth, if I do not re- | member you,\*  
if I do not set Jerusalem  
above my | highest joy!
- <sup>7</sup> Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites  
the day of Je- | rusalem,\*  
how they said, “Lay it bare, lay it bare,  
down to its foun- | dations!”
- Psalm 137:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 56*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 5:1–6:3, 10–16

The Philistines and the Ark

<sup>1</sup>When the Philistines captured the ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. <sup>2</sup>Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it up beside Dagon. <sup>3</sup>And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and put him back in

his place. <sup>4</sup>But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.

<sup>5</sup>This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

<sup>6</sup>The hand of the LORD was heavy against the people of Ashdod, and he terrified and afflicted them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory. <sup>7</sup>And when the men of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, “The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for his hand is hard against us and against Dagon our god.” <sup>8</sup>So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?” They answered, “Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath.” So they brought the ark of the God of Israel there. <sup>9</sup>But after they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city, causing a very great panic, and he afflicted the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them. <sup>10</sup>So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But as soon as the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, “They have brought around to us the ark of the God of Israel to kill us and our people.” <sup>11</sup>They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, “Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our people.” For there was a deathly panic throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there. <sup>12</sup>The men who did not die were struck with tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

## The Ark Returned to Israel

<sup>6:1</sup>The ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. <sup>2</sup>And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us with what we shall send it to its place.” <sup>3</sup>They said, “If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty, but by all means return him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why his hand does not turn away from you.” . . .

<sup>10</sup>The men did so, and took two milk cows and yoked them to the cart and shut up their calves at home. <sup>11</sup>And they put the ark of the LORD on the cart and the box with the golden mice and the images of their tumors. <sup>12</sup>And the cows went straight in the direction of Beth-shemesh along one highway, lowing as they went. They turned neither to the right nor to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh. <sup>13</sup>Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley. And when they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, they rejoiced to see it. <sup>14</sup>The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped there. A great stone was there. And they split up the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. <sup>15</sup>And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the box that was beside it, in which were the golden figures, and set them upon the great stone. And the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices on that day to the LORD. <sup>16</sup>And when the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned that day to Ekron.

**New Testament Reading:**  
**Acts 18:1–11, 23–28**

Paul in Corinth

<sup>1</sup>After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. <sup>2</sup>And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, <sup>3</sup>and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. <sup>4</sup>And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

<sup>5</sup>When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. <sup>6</sup>And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” <sup>7</sup>And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. <sup>8</sup>Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. <sup>9</sup>And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, <sup>10</sup>for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” <sup>11</sup>And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. . . .

<sup>23</sup>After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

### Apollos Speaks Boldly in Ephesus

<sup>24</sup>Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. <sup>25</sup>He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. <sup>26</sup>He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately. <sup>27</sup>And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, <sup>28</sup>for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

### Writing

The ancient teachers of the Church are, for the most part, of the opinion that Mary Magdalene was this sinful woman of which Luke writes here [Luke 7:36–56]. . . . We do not want to grow grey hairs over this debate, so we will go directly to the account that has been read . . . . How does Mary Magdalene’s repentant heart please the Lord Jesus? The host, Simon, is displeased with Mary and with Christ, but the Lord Jesus shows that there is joy in heaven over Mary’s conversion: “the sinner’s tears are the wine and delicacies of the angels.” You see, first, He turns to Mary, just as He turned to Peter in His Passion. This is a great honor. Second, He praises her tears, her kiss, and her anointing, and He lets it be clearly understood that with these “three courses,” Mary served a much more glorious meal than the host of the house himself. Of this, Christendom sings, “This

is the feast that is pleasing to You, O wise Father.” From her tears, the Lord Jesus notices a humble heart, troubled by sins committed. From her kiss, He notices her faith and trust. From the anointing, He notices the intention of her heart, that from now on she will use everything that is precious to her for the glory of Christ. Moreover, He praises the thankfulness of her heart that she showed through many signs of love; He says, “Her many sins are forgiven, on account of which she has loved much.” (This is how Basil, Chrysostom, and Theophylact explain this passage.) You can see from her many agreeing signs of love that her kisses and anointing are her “Thanks be to God!” or her “tip”—not because they are worth so much, but because she has nothing more. . . . It is not Christ’s intention to say that Mary merited the forgiveness of sins with her love . . . but rather He shows that through so many signs of love, Mary revealed her thankful heart, thankful that the Lord Jesus had graciously forgiven her so many sins. And this pleases Him very well.

—Valerius Herberger

### Hymnody

Make them apostles, heralds of Your cross;  
Forth let them go to tell the world of grace.  
Inspired by You, may they count all but loss  
And stand at last with joy before Your face.

—God of the Prophets, Bless the  
Prophets’ Sons (*LSB* 682:5)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, Your Son, Jesus Christ, restored Mary Magdalene to health and called her to be the first witness of His resurrection. Heal us from all our infirmities, and call us to know You in the power of Your Son’s unending life; through the same Jesus

Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F22)

**St. Mary Magdalene**

Whenever the New Testament Gospels name the women who were with Jesus, St. Mary Magdalene is listed first (John 19:25 is the only exception), perhaps because she was the first to see the risen Savior alive. Luke 8:2 reports that Jesus had cured her of being possessed by seven demons. Through the centuries, she has often been identified with the repentant “woman of the city” who anointed Jesus’ feet as He sat at the table in the Pharisee’s home (Luke 7:36–50). But there is no biblical basis for this identification of her with a penitent prostitute. Nor is she to be identified with Mary, the sister of Martha, in Bethany. According to the Gospels, Mary Magdalene saw Jesus die; she witnessed His burial; and, most important, she was the first to see Him alive again after His resurrection (John 20:11–18). It is for good reason that Bernard of Clairvaux calls her “the apostle to the apostles.”

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (II) 36–47

**23 JULY**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>113</sup> I hate the double- | minded,\*  
but I | love your law.
- <sup>114</sup> You are my hiding place | and my shield,\*  
I hope | in your word.
- <sup>115</sup> Depart from me, you evil- | doers,\*

that I may keep the commandments | of my God.

- <sup>116</sup> Uphold me according to your promise,  
that | I may live,\*  
and let me not be put to shame | in my hope!
- <sup>117</sup> Hold me up, that I | may be safe\*  
and have regard for your statutes  
con- | tinually!
- <sup>118</sup> You spurn all who go astray from  
your | statutes,\*  
for their cunning | is in vain.
- <sup>119</sup> All the wicked of the earth  
you dis- | card like dross,\*  
therefore I love your testi- | monies.
- <sup>120</sup> My flesh trembles for | fear of you,\*  
and I am afraid of your | judgments.  
—Psalm 119:113–120

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 141*

**Old Testament Reading:  
1 Samuel 6:19–7:17**

[The Ark Returned to Israel]  
<sup>19</sup>[The Lord] struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the LORD. He struck seventy men of them, and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great blow. <sup>20</sup>Then the men of Beth-shemesh said, “Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?” <sup>21</sup>So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, “The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to you.”  
<sup>7:1</sup>And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. And they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the ark of the LORD. <sup>2</sup>From the day

that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

Samuel Judges Israel

<sup>3</sup>And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” <sup>4</sup>So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.

<sup>5</sup>Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you.” <sup>6</sup>So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, “We have sinned against the LORD.” And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah. <sup>7</sup>Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. <sup>8</sup>And the people of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.” <sup>9</sup>So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. <sup>10</sup>As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were routed before Israel. <sup>11</sup>And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.

<sup>12</sup>Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, “Till now the LORD has helped us.” <sup>13</sup>So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. <sup>14</sup>The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

<sup>15</sup>Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. <sup>16</sup>And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places. <sup>17</sup>Then he would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he judged Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD.

### New Testament Reading: Acts 19:1–22

Paul in Ephesus

<sup>1</sup>And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. <sup>2</sup>And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” <sup>3</sup>And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” <sup>4</sup>And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” <sup>5</sup>On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup>And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. <sup>7</sup>There were about twelve men in all.

<sup>8</sup>And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup>But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup>This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

The Sons of Sceva

<sup>11</sup>And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, <sup>12</sup>so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. <sup>13</sup>Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.” <sup>14</sup>Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. <sup>15</sup>But the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?” <sup>16</sup>And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. <sup>17</sup>And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. <sup>18</sup>Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. <sup>19</sup>And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. <sup>20</sup>So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

A Riot at Ephesus

<sup>21</sup>Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” <sup>22</sup>And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

*Additional Reading: Acts 19:25–21:14*

**Writing**

But here comes the fiery angel of St. John [Revelation 10], the true preacher of repentance. With one bolt of lightning, he hurls together (both those selling and those buying works). He says: “Repent!” [Matthew 3:2].

Now one group imagines, “Why, we have repented!” The other says, “We need no repentance.”

John says, “Repent, both of you. You false penitents and false saints, both of you need the forgiveness of sins. Neither of you know what sin really is. Much less your duty to repent of it and shun it. For no one of you is good. You are full of unbelief, stupidity, and ignorance of God and God’s will. But He is present here, of whose ‘fullness we have all received, grace upon grace’” [John 1:16]. Without Him, no one can be righteous before God. Therefore, if you want to repent, repent rightly. Your works of penance will accomplish nothing. As for you hypocrites, who do not need repentance, you serpents’ brood, who has assured you that you will escape the wrath to come and other judgments?” [Matthew 3:7; Luke 3:7].

In the same way Paul also preaches, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have

become worthless; no one does good, not even one” (Romans 3:10–12). And God now “commands all people everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). “All people,” He says. No one is an exception who is a human being. This repentance teaches us to discern sin: We are completely lost; there is nothing good in us from head to foot; and we must become absolutely new and different people.

—Smalcald Articles III III 30–33

### Hymnody

O Source of uncreated light,  
The bearer of God’s gracious might,  
Thrice-holy fount, thrice-holy fire,  
Our hearts with heav’nly love inspire;  
Your sacred, healing message bring  
To sanctify us as we sing.

—Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid  
(LSB 500:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, since You never fail to help and govern those whom You nurture in Your steadfast fear and love, work in us a perpetual fear and love of Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H62)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (II) 48–60

## 24 JULY

### Psalmody

<sup>7</sup>Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And be lifted up, O | ancient doors,\*  
that the King of glory | may come in.

<sup>8</sup>Who is this King of | glory?\*

The LORD, strong and mighty,  
the LORD, mighty in | battle!

<sup>9</sup>Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And lift them up, O | ancient doors,\*  
that the King of glory | may come in.

<sup>10</sup>Who is this King of | glory?\*

The LORD of hosts,  
he is the King of | glory!

—Psalm 24:7–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 24*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 8:1–22

Israel Demands a King

<sup>1</sup>When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. <sup>2</sup>The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. <sup>3</sup>Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice.

<sup>4</sup>Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah <sup>5</sup>and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” <sup>6</sup>But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. <sup>8</sup>According to all the

deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. <sup>9</sup>Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”

Samuel’s Warning Against Kings

<sup>10</sup>So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. <sup>11</sup>He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. <sup>12</sup>And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. <sup>13</sup>He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. <sup>14</sup>He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. <sup>15</sup>He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. <sup>16</sup>He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. <sup>17</sup>He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. <sup>18</sup>And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day.”

The LORD Grants Israel’s Request

<sup>19</sup>But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, <sup>20</sup>that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.” <sup>21</sup>And when Samuel had heard all

the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. <sup>22</sup>And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.” Samuel then said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.”

**New Testament Reading: Acts 21:15–36**

[Paul Goes to Jerusalem]

<sup>15</sup>After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup>And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

Paul Visits James

<sup>17</sup>When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. <sup>18</sup>On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. <sup>19</sup>After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. <sup>20</sup>And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law, <sup>21</sup>and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. <sup>22</sup>What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. <sup>23</sup>Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; <sup>24</sup>take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. <sup>25</sup>But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have

sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

<sup>26</sup>Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.

#### Paul Arrested in the Temple

<sup>27</sup>When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, <sup>28</sup>crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” <sup>29</sup>For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. <sup>30</sup>Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. <sup>31</sup>And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. <sup>32</sup>He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. <sup>33</sup>Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done. <sup>34</sup>Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. <sup>35</sup>And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the

crowd, <sup>36</sup>for the mob of the people followed, crying out, “Away with him!”

#### Writing

[With a proper understanding of the second commandment,] the question that has troubled many teachers has been easily solved: “Why is swearing prohibited in the Gospel, and yet Christ, St. Paul, and other saints often swore?” [Matthew 5:33–37; 26:29; Acts 21:20–26]. The explanation is briefly this: We are not to swear in support of evil, that is, to support falsehood, or to swear when there is no need or use. But we should swear for the support of good and the advantage of our neighbor. For such swearing is truly a good work, by which God is praised, truth and right are established, falsehood is refuted, peace is made among men, obedience is rendered, and quarrels are settled. For in this way God Himself intervenes and separates right and wrong, good and evil. If one party swears falsely, he lives under this judgment: he shall not escape punishment. Even if this judgment is delayed a long time, he shall not succeed. So everything he may gain from his falsehood will slip out of his hands, and he will never enjoy it. I have seen this in the case of many who perjured themselves in their wedding vows. They have never had a happy hour or a healthful day, and so perished miserably in body, soul, and possessions.

—Large Catechism I 65–68

## Hymnody

The Son of God goes forth to war  
 A kingly crown to gain.  
 His blood-red banner streams afar;  
 Who follows in His train?  
 Who best can drink His cup of woe,  
 Triumphant over pain,  
 Who patient bears his cross below—  
 He follows in His train.  
 —The Son of God Goes Forth to War  
 (LSB 661:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, with Your death, the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom, giving access to Your holy presence for all people. By the preaching of Your Gospel, may You be our peace, for You have made us one and have broken down in Your flesh the dividing wall of hostility by fulfilling the Law in Your death on the cross; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1063)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (II)  
 61–74

25 JULY

*St. James the Elder, Apostle*

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>O God, you are my God; earnestly  
 I | seek you;\*  
 my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints  
 for you, as in a dry and weary land  
 where there is no | water.

<sup>2</sup>So I have looked upon you in the  
 sanctu- | ary,\*  
 beholding your power and | glory.

<sup>3</sup>Because your steadfast love is  
 bet- | ter than life,\*  
 my lips will | praise you.

<sup>4</sup>So I will bless you as long | as I live;\*  
 in your name I will lift | up my hands.

<sup>5</sup>My soul will be satisfied as with fat  
 and | rich food,\*  
 and my mouth will praise you  
 with | joyful lips,

<sup>6</sup>when I remember you up- | on my bed,\*  
 and meditate on you  
 in the watches | of the night;

<sup>7</sup>for you have | been my help,\*  
 and in the shadow of your wings  
 I will | sing for joy.

<sup>8</sup>My soul | clings to you,\*  
 your right hand up- | holds me.  
 —Psalm 63:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 149*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 9:1–27

Saul Chosen to Be King

<sup>1</sup>There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. <sup>2</sup>And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

<sup>3</sup>Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." <sup>4</sup>And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but

they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.

<sup>5</sup>When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, “Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us.” <sup>6</sup>But he said to him, “Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go.” <sup>7</sup>Then Saul said to his servant, “But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?” <sup>8</sup>The servant answered Saul again, “Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way.” <sup>9</sup>(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, “Come, let us go to the seer,” for today’s “prophet” was formerly called a seer.) <sup>10</sup>And Saul said to his servant, “Well said; come, let us go.” So they went to the city where the man of God was.

<sup>11</sup>As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, “Is the seer here?” <sup>12</sup>They answered, “He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. <sup>13</sup>As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately.” <sup>14</sup>So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw

Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

<sup>15</sup>Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: <sup>16</sup>“Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me.” <sup>17</sup>When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people.” <sup>18</sup>Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, “Tell me where is the house of the seer?” <sup>19</sup>Samuel answered Saul, “I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. <sup>20</sup>As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father’s house?” <sup>21</sup>Saul answered, “Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?”

<sup>22</sup>Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons. <sup>23</sup>And Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, ‘Put it aside.’” <sup>24</sup>So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul. And Samuel said, “See, what was kept is set before you. Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests.”

So Saul ate with Samuel that day. <sup>25</sup>And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof, and he lay down to sleep. <sup>26</sup>Then at the break of dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, “Up, that I may send you on your way.” So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

<sup>27</sup>As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God.”

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 21:37–22:16**

Paul Speaks to the People

<sup>37</sup>As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek? <sup>38</sup>Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?” <sup>39</sup>Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.” <sup>40</sup>And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

<sup>22:14</sup>“Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”

<sup>2</sup>And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said:

<sup>3</sup>“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being

zealous for God as all of you are this day. <sup>4</sup>I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, <sup>5</sup>as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

<sup>6</sup>“As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. <sup>7</sup>And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ <sup>8</sup>And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ <sup>9</sup>Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. <sup>10</sup>And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ <sup>11</sup>And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

<sup>12</sup>“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, <sup>13</sup>came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. <sup>14</sup>And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; <sup>15</sup>for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. <sup>16</sup>And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

## Writing

“We hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law,” St. Paul concludes a lengthy argumentation in which he declared that all men without exception are sinners and cannot stand before God. But by God’s grace this is changed when God forgives their sins and declares them righteous, because of Christ’s reconciliation. Men can do nothing, all is due to God’s grace. In the Gospel God offers forgiveness and perfect righteousness to sinners, and whoever believes His Word and accepts His grace thereby has forgiveness and righteousness. . . . Love calls forth love. God loved us and gave His Son to be our Savior, and if we know and realize this we shall love Him in return and show our love in works. This was also true of the man out of whom our Lord had driven the demons in the country of the Gerasenes. “The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with Him” (Luke 8:38). The grace he had experience impelled him to give evidence of this gratitude. He proclaimed throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him. This is always the result when pardoned sinners realize and believe that the Lord has saved them in body and soul, has redeemed them from their sins. . . . This then is the relation of works and justification. Works contribute nothing toward earning or meriting justification but are the natural and necessary fruit. Whoever does not love the Lord Jesus, whoever is not impelled to show his love, whoever does not thank and serve Him, evidently does not believe in the grace we have in Him. He is still in his sins and not justified. St. James writes that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way, that is, helps him to believe that his sins are covered and forgiven will

save his soul from death (St. James 5:20). The pardoned has been brought from death to life. This new life must prove itself in works of love.

—C. C. Schmidt

## Hymnody

Praise for the light from heaven  
And for the voice of awe;  
Praise for the glorious vision  
The persecutor saw.  
O Lord, for Paul’s conversion,  
We bless Your name today;  
Come shine within our darkness,  
And guide us on our way.

—By All Your Saints in Warfare  
(LSB 517:12)

## Prayer of the Day

O gracious God, Your servant and apostle James was the first among the Twelve to suffer martyrdom for the name of Jesus Christ. Pour out upon the leaders of Your Church that spirit of self-denying service that they may forsake all false and passing allurements and follow Christ alone, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F23)

## St. James the Elder, Apostle

St. James and his brother John, sons of Zebedee and Salome (see Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40), were fishermen in the Sea of Galilee who were called with Peter and his brother Andrew to follow Jesus (Matthew 4:18–22). In the Gospel lists of Jesus’ disciples, James is listed following Peter and preceding John. Together, these three appear as leaders of the Twelve. Because James precedes John, it is reasoned that James is the elder of the brothers. The Book of Acts records that James

was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I, probably between AD 42 and 44 (Acts 12:1–2). Thus James is the first of the Twelve to die a martyr.

**Suggested Reading from  
the Book of Concord**

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (II)  
75–85

**26 JULY**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>30</sup> I will praise the name of God | with a song;\*  
I will magnify him with thanks- | giving.
- <sup>31</sup> This will please the LORD more | than an ox\*  
or a bull with | horns and hoofs.
- <sup>32</sup> When the humble see it they | will be glad;\*  
you who seek God, let your | hearts  
revive.
- <sup>33</sup> For the LORD hears the | needy\*  
and does not despise his own people  
who are | prisoners.
- <sup>34</sup> Let heaven and earth | praise him,\*  
the seas and everything that | moves  
in them.
- <sup>35</sup> For God will save Zion and build up  
the cities of | Judah,\*  
and people shall dwell there  
and pos- | sess it;  
—Psalm 69:30–35

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 70*

**Old Testament Reading:  
1 Samuel 10:1–27**

Saul Anointed King

<sup>1</sup>Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, “Has not the LORD anointed you to

be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his heritage. <sup>2</sup>When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel’s tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, ‘The donkeys that you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, “What shall I do about my son?”’ <sup>3</sup>Then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. <sup>4</sup>And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand. <sup>5</sup>After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. <sup>6</sup>Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. <sup>7</sup>Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. <sup>8</sup>Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.”

<sup>9</sup>When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day. <sup>10</sup>When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of

God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them. <sup>11</sup>And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, “What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” <sup>12</sup>And a man of the place answered, “And who is their father?” Therefore it became a proverb, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” <sup>13</sup>When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.

<sup>14</sup>Saul’s uncle said to him and to his servant, “Where did you go?” And he said, “To seek the donkeys. And when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel.” <sup>15</sup>And Saul’s uncle said, “Please tell me what Samuel said to you.” <sup>16</sup>And Saul said to his uncle, “He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found.” But about the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel had spoken, he did not tell him anything.

#### Saul Proclaimed King

<sup>17</sup>Now Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah. <sup>18</sup>And he said to the people of Israel, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.’ <sup>19</sup>But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses, and you have said to him, ‘Set a king over us.’ Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands.”

<sup>20</sup>Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. <sup>21</sup>He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its clans, and the clan of the Matrites was taken by lot; and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they

sought him, he could not be found. <sup>22</sup>So they inquired again of the LORD, “Is there a man still to come?” and the LORD said, “Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage.” <sup>23</sup>Then they ran and took him from there. And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. <sup>24</sup>And Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people.” And all the people shouted, “Long live the king!”

<sup>25</sup>Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his home. <sup>26</sup>Saul also went to his home at Gibeah, and with him went men of valor whose hearts God had touched. <sup>27</sup>But some worthless fellows said, “How can this man save us?” And they despised him and brought him not present. But he held his peace.

#### New Testament Reading: Acts 22:17–29

[Paul Speaks to the People]

<sup>17</sup>“When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance <sup>18</sup>and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ <sup>19</sup>And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you.’ <sup>20</sup>And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’ <sup>21</sup>And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

Paul and the Roman Tribune

<sup>22</sup>Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “Away

with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.”<sup>23</sup> And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,<sup>24</sup> the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this.<sup>25</sup> But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?”<sup>26</sup> When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.”<sup>27</sup> So the tribune came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” And he said, “Yes.”<sup>28</sup> The tribune answered, “I bought this citizenship for a large sum.” Paul said, “But I am a citizen by birth.”<sup>29</sup> So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.

## Writing

It is lawful for the Christian to hold public office, sit in judgment, determine matters by the imperial laws and other laws currently in force, set just punishments, engage in just wars, act as a soldier, make legal contracts, hold property, take an oath (when public officials require it), and contract marriage. Finally, we have confessed that legitimate public ordinances are good creations of God and divine ordinances, which a Christian can safely use. This entire topic about the distinction between the spiritual kingdom of Christ and a political kingdom has been explained in the literature of our writers. Christ’s kingdom is spiritual

[John 18:36]. This means that the knowledge of God, the fear of God and faith, eternal righteousness, and eternal life begin in the heart. Meanwhile, Christ’s kingdom allows us outwardly to use legitimate political ordinances of every nation in which we live, just as it allows us to use medicine or the art of building, or food, drink, and air. Neither does the Gospel offer new laws about the public state, but commands that we obey present laws, whether they have been framed by heathens or by others. It commands that in this obedience we should exercise love. Carlstadt was crazy to impose on us Moses’ judicial laws. Our theologians have written more fully about these subjects. They have done so because the monks spread many deadly opinions in the Church. They called holding property in common the governance of the Gospel. They said that not holding property, or not acquitting oneself at law, were evangelical counsels. These opinions greatly cloud over the Gospel and the spiritual kingdom and are dangerous to the commonwealth. For the Gospel does not destroy the state or the family, but rather approves them and asks us to obey them as a divine ordinance, not only because of punishment, but also because of conscience.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession XVI 53–57

## Hymnody

See round Your ark the hungry billows  
curling;  
See how Your foes their banners are unfurling  
And with great spite their fiery darts are  
hurling,  
O Lord, preserve us.  
—Lord of Our Life (*LSB* 659:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, You promised that when we are dragged before kings and governors for the sake of Your name, You will give us a mouth of wisdom to bear witness to Your saving grace. Give us courage in these gray and latter days to proclaim the Gospel, even in the face of those who do not accept our testimony of You; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1064)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (II) 86–87

27 JULY

## Psalmody

<sup>17</sup> Deal bountifully with your | servant,\*  
that I may live and | keep your word.

<sup>18</sup> Open my eyes, that I | may behold\*  
wondrous things out | of your law.

<sup>19</sup> I am a sojourner | on the earth;\*  
hide not your command- | ments  
from me!

<sup>20</sup> My soul is consumed with | longing\*  
for your just decrees at | all times.

<sup>21</sup> You rebuke the insolent, ac- | cursèd ones,\*  
who wander from  
your com- | mandments.

<sup>22</sup> Take away from me scorn | and contempt,\*  
for I have kept your testi- | monies.

<sup>23</sup> Even though princes sit plotting  
a- | gainst me,\*  
your servant will meditate  
on your | statutes.

<sup>24</sup> Your testimonies are | my delight;\*

they are my | counselors.

—Psalm 119:17–24

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 141*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 12:1–25

Samuel's Farewell Address

<sup>1</sup>And Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have obeyed your voice in all that you have said to me and have made a king over you. <sup>2</sup>And now, behold, the king walks before you, and I am old and gray; and behold, my sons are with you. I have walked before you from my youth until this day. <sup>3</sup>Here I am; testify against me before the LORD and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me and I will restore it to you." <sup>4</sup>They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." <sup>5</sup>And he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they said, "He is witness."

<sup>6</sup>And Samuel said to the people, "The LORD is witness, who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. <sup>7</sup>Now therefore stand still that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous deeds of the LORD that he performed for you and for your fathers. <sup>8</sup>When Jacob went into Egypt, and the Egyptians oppressed them, then your fathers cried out to the LORD and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. <sup>9</sup>But they forgot the LORD their

God. And he sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab. And they fought against them. <sup>10</sup>And they cried out to the LORD and said, ‘We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. But now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, that we may serve you.’ <sup>11</sup>And the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Barak and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety. <sup>12</sup>And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, ‘No, but a king shall reign over us,’ when the LORD your God was your king. <sup>13</sup>And now behold the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked; behold, the LORD has set a king over you. <sup>14</sup>If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well. <sup>15</sup>But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king. <sup>16</sup>Now therefore stand still and see this great thing that the LORD will do before your eyes. <sup>17</sup>Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain. And you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking for yourselves a king.” <sup>18</sup>So Samuel called upon the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

<sup>19</sup>And all the people said to Samuel, “Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that

we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king.”

<sup>20</sup>And Samuel said to the people, “Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. <sup>21</sup>And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty. <sup>22</sup>For the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name’s sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself. <sup>23</sup>Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. <sup>24</sup>Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you. <sup>25</sup>But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.”

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 22:30–23:11**

Paul Before the Council

<sup>30</sup>But on the next day, desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.

<sup>23:1</sup>And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.” <sup>2</sup>And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. <sup>3</sup>Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?” <sup>4</sup>Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God’s high priest?” <sup>5</sup>And Paul said, “I did not know,

brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

<sup>6</sup>Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” <sup>7</sup>And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. <sup>8</sup>For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. <sup>9</sup>Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?” <sup>10</sup>And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks.

<sup>11</sup>The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.”

## Writing

This is the first commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and your soul and with your might,” according as you are able to do. The sign that you love God is this: that you love your fellow man; and if you hate your fellow man, your hatred is toward God. For it is blasphemy if you pray before God while you are wrathful. For your heart also convicts you, that vainly you multiply words; your conscience rightly judges that in your prayers you profit

nothing. Christ interceded for His murderers while hanging on the height of the tree; but rage fills you, who are dust, son of the clay, at its will. You remain angry at your brother, yet you dare to pray? Even the one standing at your side, though he is not a neighbor to your sins, the taint of iniquity extends to him, and his petition is unheard. Leave off rage and then pray; and unless you would provoke further, restrain anger and then you shall offer supplications. And so the other will not encounter you in fury, banish rages from that body, because it is held by lusts.

You have a spiritual nature; the soul is the image of the Creator. Honor the image of God by being in agreement with all men. Remember death, and do not be angry, so that your peace may not be of constraint. As long as your life remains in you, cleanse your soul from wrath. For if wrath should go to Sheol with you, your road will be straight to Gehenna. Do not keep anger in your heart; do not hold fury in your soul. You have no power over your soul, except to do that which is good. You have been bought with the blood of God; you are redeemed by the Passion of Christ. For your sake He suffered death, that you might die to your sins. His face endured spitting, that you might not shrink from scorn. He drank vinegar and gall, that you might be set apart from wrath. He received stripes on His body, that you might not fear suffering. If you are truly His servant, fear your holy Lord. If you are truly His disciple, walk in your Master’s footsteps. Endure scorn from your brother, that you may be the companion of Christ. Show no anger against man, that you are not separated from your Redeemer.

—Ephraim Syrus

## Hymnody

Preserve Your Word and preaching,  
The truth that makes us whole,  
The mirror of Your glory,  
The pow'r that saves the soul.  
Oh, may this living water,  
This dew of heav'nly grace,  
Sustain us while here living  
Until we see Your face.

—Preserve Your Word, O Savior  
(LSB 658:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Christ, our risen Lord, Your resurrection showed us what we will someday be and what we already are now through our Baptism into Your holy name. Give us courage to bear in our bodies Your resurrected life as we live out the fruit of Your victory over death through works of charity and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1065)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (II)  
88–97

**28 JULY**

*Johann Sebastian Bach, Kantor*

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Deliver me from my enemies, | O my God;\*  
protect me from those  
who rise up a- | gainst me;

<sup>2</sup> deliver me from those who work | evil,\*  
and save me from blood- | thirsty men.

<sup>3</sup> For behold, they lie in wait for my life;  
fierce men stir up strife a- | gainst me.\*  
For no transgression or sin of mine,  
O LORD, <sup>4</sup> for no fault of mine,  
they run and make | ready.

Awake, come to meet | me, and see!\*

<sup>5</sup> You, LORD God of hosts,  
are God of | Israel.

Rouse yourself to punish all the | nations;\*  
spare none of those who  
treacherously plot | evil.

—Psalm 59:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 57*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 13:1–18

Saul Fights the Philistines

<sup>1</sup> Saul was [thirty] years old when he began to reign, and he reigned [forty-]two years over Israel.

<sup>2</sup> Saul chose three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent home, every man to his tent. <sup>3</sup> Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, “Let the Hebrews hear.”

<sup>4</sup> And all Israel heard it said that Saul had defeated the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become a stench to the Philistines. And the people were called out to join Saul at Gilgal.

<sup>5</sup> And the Philistines mustered to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude. They came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of

Beth-aven. <sup>6</sup>When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble (for the people were hard pressed), the people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns, <sup>7</sup>and some Hebrews crossed the fords of the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

#### Saul's Unlawful Sacrifice

<sup>8</sup>He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. <sup>9</sup>So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering. <sup>10</sup>As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. <sup>11</sup>Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, <sup>12</sup>I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.' So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering." <sup>13</sup>And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. <sup>14</sup>But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." <sup>15</sup>And Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal. The rest of the people went up after Saul to

meet the army; they went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.

And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men. <sup>16</sup>And Saul and Jonathan his son and the people who were present with them stayed in Geba of Benjamin, but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. <sup>17</sup>And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual; <sup>18</sup>another company turned toward Beth-horon; and another company turned toward the border that looks down on the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

#### New Testament Reading: Acts 23:12–35

##### A Plot to Kill Paul

<sup>12</sup>When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. <sup>13</sup>There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. <sup>14</sup>They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. <sup>15</sup>Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

<sup>16</sup>Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. <sup>17</sup>Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him." <sup>18</sup>So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, "Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you." <sup>19</sup>The tribune took him by the hand,

and going aside asked him privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?”<sup>20</sup> And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him.<sup>21</sup> But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent.”<sup>22</sup> So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, “Tell no one that you have informed me of these things.”

Paul Sent to Felix the Governor

<sup>23</sup>Then he called two of the centurions and said, “Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night.<sup>24</sup> Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor.”<sup>25</sup> And he wrote a letter to this effect:

<sup>26</sup>“Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings.<sup>27</sup> This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen.<sup>28</sup> And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council.<sup>29</sup> I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment.<sup>30</sup> And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him.”

<sup>31</sup>So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris.<sup>32</sup> And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him.<sup>33</sup> When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him.<sup>34</sup> On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia,<sup>35</sup> he said, “I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive.” And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod’s praetorium.

## Writing

I would certainly like to praise music with all my heart as the excellent gift of God which it is and to commend it to everyone. . . . Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. She is a mistress and governess of those human emotions—to pass over the animals—which as masters govern men or more often overwhelm them. No greater commendation than this can be found—at least not by us. For whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate—and who could number all these masters of the human heart, namely, the emotions, inclinations, and affections that impel men to evil or good?—what more effective means than music could you find? The Holy Ghost himself honors her as an instrument for his proper work when in his Holy Scriptures he asserts that through her his gifts were instilled in the prophets, namely, the inclination to all virtues, as can be seen in Elisha [II Kings 3:15]. On the other hand, she serves to cast out Satan, the

instigator of all sins, as is shown in Saul, the king of Israel [I Sam. 16:23].

Thus it was not without reason that the fathers and prophets wanted nothing else to be associated as closely with the Word of God as music. Therefore, we have so many hymns and Psalms where message and music join to move the listener's soul, while in other living beings and [sounding] bodies music remains a language without words. After all, the gift of language combined with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God with both word and music, namely, by proclaiming [the Word of God] through music and by providing sweet melodies with words.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Lord, be our light when worldly darkness veils us;

Lord, be our shield when earthly armor fails us;

And in the day when hell itself assails us,  
Grant us Your peace, Lord.

—Lord of Our Life (*LSB* 659:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, beautiful in majesty and majestic in holiness, You have taught us in Holy Scripture to sing Your praises and have given to Your servant Johann Sebastian Bach grace to show forth Your glory in his music. Continue to grant this gift of inspiration to all Your servants who write and make music for Your people, that with joy we on earth may glimpse Your beauty and at length know the inexhaustible richness of Your new creation in Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives

and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1066)

### Johann Sebastian Bach, Kantor

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) is acknowledged as one of the most famous and gifted composers ever in the Western world. Orphaned at age ten, Bach was mostly self-taught in music. His professional life as conductor, performer, composer, teacher, and organ consultant began at age nineteen in the town of Arnstadt and ended in Leipzig, where for the last twenty-seven years of his life he was responsible for all the music in the city's four Lutheran churches. In addition to being a superb keyboard artist, the genius and bulk of Bach's vocal and instrumental compositions remain overwhelming. A devout and devoted Lutheran, he is especially honored in Christendom for his lifelong insistence that his music was written primarily for the liturgical life of the Church to glorify God and edify His people.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (II)  
98–106

## 29 JULY

*Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany*

### Psalmody

<sup>41</sup> Let your steadfast love come to me, | O LORD,\*  
your salvation according to your | promise;

<sup>42</sup> then shall I have an answer  
 for him who | taunts me,\*  
 for I trust | in your word.

<sup>43</sup> And take not the word of truth  
 utterly out | of my mouth,\*  
 for my hope is in your | just decrees.

<sup>44</sup> I will keep your law con- | tinually,\*  
 forever and | ever,

<sup>45</sup> and I shall walk in a | wide place,\*  
 for I have sought your | precepts.

<sup>46</sup> I will also speak of your testimonies  
 be- | fore kings\*  
 and shall not be | put to shame,

<sup>47</sup> for I find my delight in your  
 com- | mandments,\*  
 which | I love.

<sup>48</sup> I will lift up my hands toward your  
 commandments, | which I love,\*  
 and I will meditate on your | statutes.

—Psalm 119:41–48

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 13*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 14:47–15:9

Saul Fights Israel's Enemies

<sup>47</sup>When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned he routed them. <sup>48</sup>And he did valiantly and struck the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.

<sup>49</sup>Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchi-shua. And the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn was Merab, and the name of the younger Michal. <sup>50</sup>And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz.

And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. <sup>51</sup>Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

<sup>52</sup>There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself.

The LORD Rejects Saul

<sup>15:1</sup>And Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the Lord. <sup>2</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. <sup>3</sup>Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' "

<sup>4</sup>So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah. <sup>5</sup>And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley. <sup>6</sup>Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. <sup>7</sup>And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt. <sup>8</sup>And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword. <sup>9</sup>But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that

was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.

### New Testament Reading: Acts 24:1–23

Paul Before Felix at Caesarea

<sup>1</sup>And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul. <sup>2</sup>And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying:

“Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, <sup>3</sup>in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. <sup>4</sup>But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. <sup>5</sup>For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. <sup>6</sup>He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. <sup>8</sup>By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.”

<sup>9</sup>The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.

<sup>10</sup>And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied:

“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. <sup>11</sup>You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, <sup>12</sup>and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. <sup>13</sup>Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. <sup>14</sup>But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship

the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, <sup>15</sup>having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. <sup>16</sup>So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man. <sup>17</sup>Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings. <sup>18</sup>While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia—<sup>19</sup>they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. <sup>20</sup>Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, <sup>21</sup>other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: ‘It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.’”

Paul Kept in Custody

<sup>22</sup>But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.” <sup>23</sup>Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.

### Writing

Beloved Christians! The godly have their manner, and it is a good manner. The evil also have their characteristic, and it is an evil characteristic. The life of Christians is that they alone believe what is written about Christ in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets; next, that they through Christ hope in the resurrection of the dead and eternal life; and, in addition, that they

practice and earnestly strive to have a good conscience everywhere, both toward God through faith in Christ and toward men through blameless conduct.

The life of the godless, on the other hand, is that they are terribly afraid of the preaching of the Holy Gospel and would rather not know it, lest it produce a heavy conscience; next, that they are secure and have hope that everywhere and in all things they may enjoy the benefits of the people and their prayers. Moreover, they conduct themselves and use their office in such a way that they do not lose the world's favor. God grant that all of us, both authorities and subjects, flee the vices of the children and rulers of the world and instead follow the manner of God's children and the Lord God's authorities, that we may forsake the evil and do the good, and thus have God's favor and blessing and live for His honor and for the welfare of every man, until death and our entrance into heaven. Amen.

—Veit Dietrich

### Hymnody

Holy Spirit, ever living  
 As the Church's very life;  
 Holy Spirit, ever striving  
 Through us in a ceaseless strife;  
 Holy Spirit, ever forming  
 In the Church the mind of Christ:  
 You we praise with endless worship  
 For Your gifts and fruits unpriced.

—Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling  
 (LSB 650:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, Your beloved Son  
 befriended frail humans like us to make us

Your own. Teach us to be like Jesus' dear friends from Bethany, that we might serve Him faithfully like Martha, learn from Him earnestly like Mary, and ultimately be raised by Him like Lazarus. Through their Lord and ours, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1067)

### Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany were disciples with whom Jesus had a special bond of love and friendship. John's Gospel records that "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" (John 11:5). On one occasion, Martha welcomed Jesus into their home for a meal. While Martha did all the work, Mary sat at Jesus' feet, listening to His Word and was commended by Jesus for choosing the "good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:38–42). When their brother Lazarus died, Jesus spoke to Martha this beautiful Gospel promise: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). Ironically, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Jews became more determined than ever to kill Jesus (John 11:39–54). Six days before Jesus was crucified, Mary anointed His feet with a very expensive fragrant oil and wiped them with her hair, not knowing at the time that she was doing it in preparation for Jesus' burial (John 12:1–8; Matthew 26:6–13).

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (II)  
 107–114

## 30 JULY

*Robert Barnes, Confessor and Martyr*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>The Mighty One, God the LORD,  
speaks and sum- | mons the earth\*  
from the rising of the sun to its | setting.
- <sup>2</sup>Out of Zion, the perfection of | beauty,\*  
God | shines forth.
- <sup>3</sup>Our God comes; he does not keep | silence,\*  
before him is a devouring fire,  
around him a mighty | tempest.
- <sup>4</sup>He calls to the heav- | ens above\*  
and to the earth, that he may judge  
his | people:
- <sup>5</sup>“Gather to me my | faithful ones,\*  
who made a covenant  
with me by | sacrifice!”
- <sup>6</sup>The heavens declare his | righteousness,\*  
for God him- | self is judge!  
—Psalm 50:1–6

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 130*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 15:10–35

[The LORD Rejects Saul]

<sup>10</sup>The word of the LORD came to Samuel:  
<sup>11</sup>“I regret that I have made Saul king, for  
he has turned back from following me and  
has not performed my commandments.”  
And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the  
LORD all night. <sup>12</sup>And Samuel rose early to  
meet Saul in the morning. And it was told  
Samuel, “Saul came to Carmel, and behold,  
he set up a monument for himself and  
turned and passed on and went down to  
Gilgal.” <sup>13</sup>And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul  
said to him, “Blessed be you to the LORD. I  
have performed the commandment of the

LORD.” <sup>14</sup>And Samuel said, “What then is  
this bleating of the sheep in my ears and  
the lowing of the oxen that I hear?” <sup>15</sup>Saul  
said, “They have brought them from the  
Amalekites, for the people spared the best  
of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to  
the LORD your God, and the rest we have  
devoted to destruction.” <sup>16</sup>Then Samuel said  
to Saul, “Stop! I will tell you what the LORD  
said to me this night.” And he said to him,  
“Speak.”

<sup>17</sup>And Samuel said, “Though you are  
little in your own eyes, are you not the head  
of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed  
you king over Israel. <sup>18</sup>And the LORD sent  
you on a mission and said, ‘Go, devote to  
destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and  
fight against them until they are consumed.’  
<sup>19</sup>Why then did you not obey the voice of the  
LORD? Why did you pounce on the spoil and  
do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?”  
<sup>20</sup>And Saul said to Samuel, “I have obeyed  
the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the  
mission on which the LORD sent me. I have  
brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have  
devoted the Amalekites to destruction. <sup>21</sup>But  
the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen,  
the best of the things devoted to destruction,  
to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.”

<sup>22</sup>And Samuel said,

“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt  
offerings and sacrifices,  
as in obeying the voice of the LORD?  
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,  
and to listen than the fat of rams.

<sup>23</sup>For rebellion is as the sin of divination,  
and presumption is as iniquity  
and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word  
of the LORD,

he has also rejected you from being king.”

<sup>24</sup>Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. <sup>25</sup>Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may worship the LORD.” <sup>26</sup>And Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.” <sup>27</sup>As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. <sup>28</sup>And Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. <sup>29</sup>And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.” <sup>30</sup>Then he said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the LORD your God.” <sup>31</sup>So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the LORD.

<sup>32</sup>Then Samuel said, “Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites.” And Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” <sup>33</sup>And Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

<sup>34</sup>Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeath of Saul. <sup>35</sup>And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

## New Testament Reading: Acts 24:24–25:12

[Paul Kept in Custody]

<sup>24</sup>After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup>And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.” <sup>26</sup>At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him. <sup>27</sup>When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

Paul Appeals to Caesar

<sup>25:1</sup>Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. <sup>2</sup>And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him, <sup>3</sup>asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way. <sup>4</sup>Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly. <sup>5</sup>“So,” said he, “let the men of authority among you go down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them bring charges against him.”

<sup>6</sup>After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. <sup>7</sup>When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not

prove. <sup>8</sup>Paul argued in his defense, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.” <sup>9</sup>But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?” <sup>10</sup>But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. <sup>11</sup>If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.” <sup>12</sup>Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”

## Writing

This Dr. Robert Barnes we certainly knew, and it is a particular joy for me to hear that our good, pious dinner guest and houseguest has been so graciously called by God to pour out his blood and to become a holy martyr for the sake of His dear Son. Thanks, praise, and glory be to the Father of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, who again, as at the beginning, has granted us to see the time in which His Christians, before our eyes and from our eyes and from beside us, are carried off to become martyrs (that is, carried off to heaven) and become saints.

Now, since this holy martyr, St. Robert Barnes, heard at the time that his King Henry VIII of England was opposed to the pope, he came back to England with the hope of planting the Gospel in his homeland and finally brought it about that it began. To cut a long story short, Henry of England was pleased with him, as is his way, until he

sent him to us at Wittenberg in the marriage matter.

Dr. Robert Barnes himself often said to me: *Rex meus non curat religionem, Sed est*, etc. [“My king does not care about religion, but he is,” etc.]. Yet he loved his king and homeland so keenly that he willingly endured everything like that and always thought to help England. And it is indeed true that one who would not be optimistic toward his homeland and would not wish everything good for his prince must be a shameful rogue, as not only the Scriptures but also all our laws teach. He always had these words in his mouth: *Rex meus, regem meum* [“my king, my king”], as his confession indeed indicates that even until his death he was loyal toward his king with all love and faithfulness, which was repaid by Henry with evil. Hope betrayed him. For he always hoped his king would become good in the end.

Let us praise and thank God! This is a blessed time for the elect saints of Christ and an unfortunate, grievous time for the devil, for blasphemers, and enemies, and it is going to get even worse. Amen.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Preserve, O Lord, Your honor,  
The bold blasphemer smite;  
Convince, convert, enlighten  
The souls in error’s night.  
Reveal Your will, dear Savior,  
To all who dwell below,  
Great light of all the living,  
That all Your name may know.

—Preserve Your Word, O Savior  
(LSB 658:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, heavenly Father, You gave courage to Your servant Robert Barnes to give up his life for confessing the true faith during the Reformation. May we continue steadfast in our confession of the apostolic faith and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1068)

## Robert Barnes, Confessor and Martyr

Remembered as a devoted disciple of Martin Luther, Robert Barnes is considered to be among the first Lutheran martyrs. Born in 1495, Barnes became the prior of the Augustinian monastery at Cambridge, England. Converted to Lutheran teaching, he shared his insights with many English scholars through writings and personal contacts. During a time of exile to Germany, he became friends with Luther and later wrote a Latin summary of the main doctrines of the Augsburg Confession titled *Sententiae*. Upon his return to England, Barnes shared his Lutheran doctrines and views in person with King Henry VIII and initially had a positive reception. In 1529, Barnes was named royal chaplain. The changing political and ecclesiastical climate in his native country, however, claimed him as a victim; he was burned at the stake in Smithfield in 1540. His final confession of faith was published by Luther, who called his friend Barnes “our good, pious dinner guest and houseguest . . . this holy martyr, St. Robert Barnes.”

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV (II)  
115–121

## 31 JULY

*Joseph of Arimathea*

## Psalmody

<sup>14</sup> Turn again, O | God of hosts!\*  
Look down from | heaven, and see;  
have regard for this vine, <sup>15</sup> the stock that  
your right hand | planted,\*  
and for the son whom you made  
strong | for yourself.

<sup>16</sup> They have burned it with fire;  
they have | cut it down;\*  
may they perish at the rebuke | of  
your face!

<sup>17</sup> But let your hand be on the man  
of your | right hand,\*  
the son of man whom you have made  
strong | for yourself!

<sup>18</sup> Then we shall not turn | back from you;\*  
give us life, and we will call up- | on  
your name!

<sup>19</sup> Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts!\*  
let your face shine, that we | may  
be saved!

—Psalm 80:14–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 80*

## Old Testament Reading:

**1 Samuel 16:1–23**

David Anointed King

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill

your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”<sup>2</sup> And Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’”<sup>3</sup> And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you.”<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?”<sup>5</sup> And he said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup>When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before him.”<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”<sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”<sup>10</sup> And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.”<sup>11</sup> Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.”<sup>12</sup> And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said,

“Arise, anoint him, for this is he.”<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

David in Saul’s Service

<sup>14</sup>Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him.<sup>15</sup> And Saul’s servants said to him, “Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you.”<sup>16</sup> Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well.”<sup>17</sup> So Saul said to his servants, “Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me.”<sup>18</sup> One of the young men answered, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the LORD is with him.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me David your son, who is with the sheep.”<sup>20</sup> And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them by David his son to Saul.<sup>21</sup> And David came to Saul and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer.<sup>22</sup> And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, “Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight.”<sup>23</sup> And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him.

**New Testament Reading: Acts 25:13–27**

Paul Before Agrippa and Bernice

<sup>13</sup>Now when some days had passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and greeted Festus. <sup>14</sup>And as they stayed there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a man left prisoner by Felix, <sup>15</sup>and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews laid out their case against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. <sup>16</sup>I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up anyone before the accused met the accusers face to face and had opportunity to make his defense concerning the charge laid against him. <sup>17</sup>So when they came together here, I made no delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. <sup>18</sup>When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed. <sup>19</sup>Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. <sup>20</sup>Being at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding them. <sup>21</sup>But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to Caesar." <sup>22</sup>Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," said he, "you will hear him." <sup>23</sup>So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. <sup>24</sup>And Festus said, "King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this

man about whom the whole Jewish people petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. <sup>25</sup>But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him. <sup>26</sup>But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write. <sup>27</sup>For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him."

**Writing**

A Preface for All Good Hymnals  
 Dame Music [speaks:]

Of all the joys upon this earth  
 None has for men a greater worth  
 Than what I give with my ringing  
 And with voices sweetly singing.  
 There cannot be an evil mood  
 Where there are singing fellows good,  
 There is no envy, hate, nor ire,  
 Gone are through me all sorrows dire;  
 Greed, care, and lonely heaviness  
 No more do they the heart oppress.  
 Each man can in his mirth be free  
 Since such a joy no sin can be.  
 But God in me more pleasure finds  
 Than in all joys of earthly minds.  
 Through my bright power the devil shirks  
 His sinful, murderous, evil works.  
 Of this King David's deeds do tell  
 Who pacified King Saul so well  
 By sweetly playing on the lyre  
 And thus escaped his murderous ire.  
 For truth divine and God's own rede  
 The heart of humble faith shall lead;

Such did Elisha once propound  
 When harping he the Spirit found.  
 The best time of the year is mine  
 When all the birds are singing fine.  
 Heaven and earth their voices fill  
 With right good song and tuneful trill.  
 And, queen of all, the nightingale  
 Men's hearts will merrily regale  
 With music so charmingly gay;  
 For which be thanks to her for aye.  
 But thanks be first to God, our Lord,  
 Who created her by his Word  
 To be his own beloved songstress  
 And of *musica* a mistress.  
 For our dear Lord she sings her song  
 In praise of him the whole day long;  
 To him I give my melody  
 And thanks in all eternity.  
 —Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Stand up, stand up for Jesus;  
 Stand in His strength alone.  
 The arm of flesh will fail you,  
 Ye dare not trust your own.  
 Put on the Gospel armor;  
 Each piece put on with prayer.  
 Where duty calls or danger,  
 Be never wanting there.

—Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus  
 (LSB 660:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Merciful God, Your servant Joseph of Arimathea prepared the body of our Lord and Savior for burial with reverence and godly fear and laid Him in his own tomb. As we follow the example of Joseph, grant to us, Your faithful people, that same grace and courage to love and serve Jesus with sincere

devotion all the days of our lives; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1069)

### Joseph of Arimathea

This Joseph, mentioned in all four Gospels, came from a small village called Arimathea in the hill country of Judea. He was a respected member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish religious council in Jerusalem. He was presumably wealthy, since he owned his own unused tomb in a garden not far from the site of Jesus' crucifixion (Matthew 27:60). Joseph, a man waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went to Pontius Pilate after the death of Jesus and asked for Jesus' body (Mark 15:43). Along with Nicodemus, Joseph removed the body and placed it in the tomb (John 19:38–39). Their public devotion contrasted greatly to the fearfulness of the disciples who had abandoned Jesus.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession V (III)  
 1–8 [122–129]

## 1 AUGUST

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Make haste, O God, to de- | liver me!\*  
 O LORD, make haste to | help me!

<sup>2</sup> Let them be put to shame and confusion  
 who | seek my life!\*

Let them be turned back and brought to  
 dishonor who de- | sire my hurt!

<sup>3</sup>Let them turn back because | of  
their shame\*

who say, “A- | ha, Aha!”

<sup>4</sup>May all who seek you rejoice  
and be | glad in you!\*

May those who love your salvation say  
evermore, | “God is great!”

<sup>5</sup>But I am poor and needy;  
hasten to me, | O God!\*

You are my help and my deliverer;

O LORD, do | not delay!

—Psalm 70

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 75*

## Old Testament Reading:

### 1 Samuel 17:1–19

David and Goliath

<sup>1</sup>Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. And they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. <sup>2</sup>And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. <sup>3</sup>And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. <sup>4</sup>And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. <sup>5</sup>He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. <sup>6</sup>And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. <sup>7</sup>The shaft of his spear was like a weaver’s beam, and his spear’s head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him. <sup>8</sup>He stood and

shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. <sup>9</sup>If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.” <sup>10</sup>And the Philistine said, “I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.” <sup>11</sup>When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

<sup>12</sup>Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. <sup>13</sup>The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. <sup>14</sup>David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, <sup>15</sup>but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem. <sup>16</sup>For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.

<sup>17</sup>And Jesse said to David his son, “Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. <sup>18</sup>Also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well, and bring some token from them.”

<sup>19</sup>Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

**New Testament Reading: Acts 26:1–23**

Paul's Defense Before Agrippa

<sup>1</sup>So Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense:

<sup>2</sup>“I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, <sup>3</sup>especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

<sup>4</sup>“My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. <sup>5</sup>They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. <sup>6</sup>And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, <sup>7</sup>to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! <sup>8</sup>Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

<sup>9</sup>“I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup>And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. <sup>11</sup>And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

Paul Tells of His Conversion

<sup>12</sup>“In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and

commission of the chief priests. <sup>13</sup>At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. <sup>14</sup>And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ <sup>15</sup>And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup>But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, <sup>17</sup>delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you <sup>18</sup>to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

<sup>19</sup>“Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, <sup>20</sup>but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.

<sup>21</sup>For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. <sup>22</sup>To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: <sup>23</sup>that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

## Writing

The Scriptures flatly call natural man in spiritual and divine things *darkness* (Ephesians 5:8; Acts 26:18). John 1:5 says, “The light shines in the darkness” (that is, in the dark, blind world, which does not know or regard God), “and the darkness has not overcome it.” Likewise, the Scriptures teach that a sinful person is not only weak and sick, but also finished and entirely dead (Ephesians 2:1–5; Colossians 2:13).

Now, a person who is physically dead cannot from his own powers prepare or make himself come back to life again. So the person who is spiritually dead in sins cannot by his own strength make or apply himself to acquire spiritual and heavenly righteousness and life. This is true unless he is delivered and brought to life by God’s Son from the death of sin.

The Scriptures deny to the intellect, heart, and will of the natural man all readiness, skill, capacity, and ability to think, to understand, to be able to do, to begin, to will, to undertake, to act, to work, or to agree to work anything good and right in spiritual things from himself.

... “The natural person does not accept [or, as the Greek word properly signifies, grasps not, comprehends not, accepts not] the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:14). This means he is not capable of spiritual things. For they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them. Much less will he truly believe the Gospel or agree with it and regard it as truth.

For the mind that is set on the flesh  
[or the mind of the natural man] is  
hostile to God, for it does not submit

to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.  
(Romans 8:7)

In a word, what God’s Son says remains eternally true, “For apart from Me you can do nothing” [John 15:5].

Paul says, “For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” [Philippians 2:13].

—Solid Declaration of the Formula  
of Concord II 10–14

## Hymnody

True God, He first  
From death has burst  
Forth into life, all subduing.  
His enemy  
Doth vanquished lie;  
His death has been death’s undoing.  
“And yours shall be  
Like victory  
O’er death and grave,”  
Saith He, who gave  
His life for us, life renewing.

—With High Delight, Let Us Unite  
(LSB 483:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Gracious Lord of all, You turned the apostle Paul from a persecutor of the Church to the apostle to the Gentiles. By Your Holy Word, turn our hearts from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, that we might receive the forgiveness of our sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1070)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession V (III):  
9–14 [130–135]

## 2 AUGUST

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>In you, O LORD, do I take | refuge;\*  
let me never be | put to shame!
- <sup>2</sup>In your righteousness deliver me  
and | rescue me;\*  
incline your ear to me, and | save me!
- <sup>3</sup>Be to me a rock of refuge,  
to which I may contin- | ually come;\*  
you have given the command to save me,  
for you are my rock and my | fortress.
- <sup>4</sup>Rescue me, O my God, from the hand  
of the | wicked,\*  
from the grasp of the unjust  
and | cruel man.
- <sup>5</sup>For you, O Lord, | are my hope,\*  
my trust, O LORD, | from my youth.
- <sup>6</sup>Upon you I have leaned from before  
my birth; you are he who took me  
from my | mother's womb.\*  
My praise is continually | of you.
- <sup>7</sup>I have been as a portent to | many,\*  
but you are my strong | refuge.
- <sup>8</sup>My mouth is filled | with your praise,\*  
and with your glory | all the day.  
—Psalm 71:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 98*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 17:20–47

[David and Goliath]

<sup>20</sup>And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host was going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry. <sup>21</sup>And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. <sup>22</sup>And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. <sup>23</sup>As he talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him.

<sup>24</sup>All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid. <sup>25</sup>And the men of Israel said, “Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel. And the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father’s house free in Israel.” <sup>26</sup>And David said to the men who stood by him, “What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” <sup>27</sup>And the people answered him in the same way, “So shall it be done to the man who kills him.”

<sup>28</sup>Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab’s anger was kindled against David, and he said, “Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come

down to see the battle.”<sup>29</sup> And David said, “What have I done now? Was it not but a word?”<sup>30</sup> And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him again as before.

<sup>31</sup>When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him.<sup>32</sup> And David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.”<sup>33</sup> And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth.”<sup>34</sup> But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock,<sup>35</sup> I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him.<sup>36</sup> Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.”<sup>37</sup> And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!”

<sup>38</sup>Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail,<sup>39</sup> and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.” So David put them off.<sup>40</sup> Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd’s pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine.

<sup>41</sup>And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him.<sup>42</sup> And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance.<sup>43</sup> And the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.<sup>44</sup> The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.”<sup>45</sup> Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.<sup>46</sup> This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,<sup>47</sup> and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand.”

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 26:24–27:8**

[Paul Tells of His Conversion]

<sup>24</sup>And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.”<sup>25</sup> But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words.<sup>26</sup> For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner.<sup>27</sup> King Agrippa,

do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.”<sup>28</sup> And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?”<sup>29</sup> And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

<sup>30</sup>Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them. <sup>31</sup>And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, “This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment.”

<sup>32</sup>And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

Paul Sails for Rome

<sup>27:1</sup>And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius. <sup>2</sup>And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. <sup>3</sup>The next day we put in at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. <sup>4</sup>And putting out to sea from there we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. <sup>5</sup>And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. <sup>6</sup>There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. <sup>7</sup>We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. <sup>8</sup>Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to

a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.

## Writing

In spiritual and divine things, which apply to the salvation of the soul, a person . . . is like a lifeless statue, which uses neither eyes nor mouth, neither sense nor heart. For a person neither sees nor perceives God’s terrible and fierce wrath resulting from sin and death. He always continues in his security, even knowingly and willingly. In this way he falls into a thousand dangers, and finally into eternal death and damnation. No prayers, no supplications, no warnings, indeed, also no threats, no chiding, are of any help. Indeed, all teaching and preaching is lost on him until he is enlightened, converted, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. For only mankind . . . was created for renewal by the Holy Spirit. According to God’s just, strict sentence, He has utterly cast away the fallen evil spirits forever. Nevertheless, out of special, pure mercy, He has willed that poor fallen human nature might again become and be capable of and be a participant in conversion, God’s grace and eternal life. This comes not from its own natural, active skill, ability, or capacity (for a person’s nature is stubbornly hostile against God). It comes only from pure grace, through the gracious effective working of the Holy Spirit.

Before a person is enlightened, converted, regenerated, renewed, and drawn by the Holy Spirit, he can by himself and by his own natural powers begin, work, or agree to work in spiritual things and in his own conversion or regeneration as little as a stone, a block, or a lump of clay. He can control the outward members of his body and hear the Gospel. To a certain extent

he can meditate on it and discuss it, as is to be seen in the Pharisees and hypocrites [Matthew 23:25–28]. Nevertheless, he regards it as foolishness and cannot believe it. In this respect he acts even worse than a block. For he is rebellious and hostile to God’s will, unless the Holy Spirit is effective on him and kindles and works in him faith and other abilities pleasing to God, and obedience.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord II 20–22, 24

### Hymnody

Father, hear my prayer,  
Keep me safe today;  
Sanctify my thoughts,  
All I do and say:  
As I teach the young  
And esteem the old,  
May Your bounteous grace  
By my life be told.

—Greet The Rising Sun (*LSB* 871:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, before whom all in heaven and earth shall bow, grant courage that Your children may confess Your saving name in the face of any opposition from a world hostile to the Gospel. Help them to remember Your faithful people who sacrificed much and even faced death rather than dishonor You when called upon to deny the faith. By Your Spirit, strengthen them to be faithful and to confess You boldly, knowing that You will confess Your own before the Father in heaven, with whom You and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, now and forever. (111)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession V (III) 15–25 [136–146]

## 3 AUGUST

*Joanna, Mary, and Salome, Myrrhbearers*

### Psalmody

<sup>4</sup> Sing to God, sing praises | to his name;\*  
lift up a song to him who rides through  
the deserts; his name is the LORD;  
exult be- | fore him!

<sup>5</sup> Father of the fatherless and protector  
of | widows\*  
is God in his holy habi- | tation.

<sup>6</sup> God settles the solitary in a home; he leads  
out the prisoners to pros- | perity,\*  
but the rebellious dwell  
in a | parched land.

<sup>7</sup> O God, when you went out before  
your | people,\*  
when you marched  
through the | wilderness,

<sup>8</sup> the earth quaked, the heavens poured down  
rain, before God, the One of | Sinai,\*  
before God, the God of | Israel.

<sup>9</sup> Rain in abundance, O God,  
you | shed abroad,\*  
you restored your inheritance  
as it | languished;

<sup>10</sup> your flock found a dwell- | ing in it;\*  
in your goodness, O God,  
you provided for the | needy.

—Psalm 68:4–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 68*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 17:48–18:9

[David and Goliath]

<sup>48</sup>When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. <sup>49</sup>And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

<sup>50</sup>So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David. <sup>51</sup>Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. <sup>52</sup>And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. <sup>53</sup>And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. <sup>54</sup>And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.

<sup>55</sup>As soon as Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, “Abner, whose son is this youth?” And Abner said, “As your soul lives, O king, I do not know.” <sup>56</sup>And the king said, “Inquire whose son the boy is.” <sup>57</sup>And as soon as David returned from the striking down of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. <sup>58</sup>And Saul said to him, “Whose son are you, young man?”

And David answered, “I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.”

David and Jonathan’s Friendship

<sup>18:1</sup>As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. <sup>2</sup>And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father’s house. <sup>3</sup>Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. <sup>4</sup>And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. <sup>5</sup>And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul’s servants.

Saul’s Jealousy of David

<sup>6</sup>As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. <sup>7</sup>And the women sang to one another as they celebrated,

“Saul has struck down his thousands,  
and David his ten thousands.”

<sup>8</sup>And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?” <sup>9</sup>And Saul eyed David from that day on.

## New Testament Reading: Acts 27:9–26

[Paul Sails for Rome]

<sup>9</sup>Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the

Fast was already over, Paul advised them, <sup>10</sup>saying, “Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.”

<sup>11</sup>But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. <sup>12</sup>And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.

#### The Storm at Sea

<sup>13</sup>Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. <sup>14</sup>But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land. <sup>15</sup>And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along.

<sup>16</sup>Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship’s boat. <sup>17</sup>After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and thus they were driven along. <sup>18</sup>Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. <sup>19</sup>And on the third day they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands. <sup>20</sup>When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.

<sup>21</sup>Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred

this injury and loss. <sup>22</sup>Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. <sup>23</sup>For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, <sup>24</sup>and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ <sup>25</sup>So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. <sup>26</sup>But we must run aground on some island.”

#### Writing

Why was Christ’s resurrection revealed to these women first? There are several answers. First, God was keeping His ancient custom of choosing what is foolish, undistinguished, and despised in the eyes of the world in order to put the strong and lofty to shame. These women were despised not only due to the weakness of their gender but also because of Galilee, their homeland. But God exalts them by revealing to them the resurrection of His Son, which is an excellent article of our faith. Indeed, He even sends them to the apostles to share the message of Christ’s resurrection with them, so that they become, as the ancients say, like “apostles to the apostles.” . . .

Third, in this way God wanted to prevent the accusations of the Jews. The high priests lied, saying that Christ’s disciples had stolen the body of their master. In order to prove the shamelessness and absurdity of this lie, it happened by God’s marvelous providence that these women came to the grave before the apostles. Now, it is highly unlikely that these few women could have stolen the body

from a grave guarded by soldiers and closed by a large stone.

Fourth, through the woman Eve, death came to all human beings. On account of this, Christ wanted His resurrection, which brings us righteousness and life, to be told to others by women. At the fall of the first human being, these three worked together: the devil, who deceived; the woman, who proclaimed his talk further; the man, who ate and corrupted human nature. So also, at Christ's resurrection, these three worked together: Christ, who rose and redeemed human nature; the angel, who proclaimed the resurrection; and the women, who carried the joyful message further.

Now if Christ was pleased with the zeal of these women, which was yet bound together with significant weaknesses of faith, and did not let them come away from the tomb empty, how much less will He let those go away empty who in true faith seek Him who rules at the right hand of the Father!

—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

Now that the daylight fills the sky,  
We lift our hearts to God on high,  
That He, in all we do or say,  
Would keep us free from harm today.

—Now That the Daylight Fills the Sky  
(LSB 870:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Mighty God, Your crucified and buried Son did not remain in the tomb for long. Give us joy in the tasks set before us, that we might carry out faithful acts of service as did Joanna, Mary, and Salome, offering to You the sweet perfume of our grateful

hearts, so that we, too, may see the glory of Your resurrection and proclaim the Good News with unrestrained eagerness and fervor worked in us through our Lord Jesus Christ, who rose and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1071)

### Joanna, Mary, and Salome, Myrrhbearers

Known in some traditions as “the faithful women,” the visit of these three persons and other women to the tomb of Jesus on the first Easter morning is noted in the Gospel records of Matthew (28:1), Mark (16:1), and Luke (24:10). Joanna was the wife of Chuza, a steward in Herod's household (Luke 8:3). Mary, the mother of James (the son of Alphaeus), was another of the women who faithfully provided care for Jesus and His disciples from the time of His Galilean ministry through His burial after the crucifixion. Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Matthew 27:56), joined with the women both at the cross and in bringing the spices to the garden tomb. These faithful women have been honored in the Church through the centuries as examples of humble and devoted service to the Lord.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession V (III)  
26–37 [147–158]

4 AUGUST

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup> Be gracious to me, O God,  
 for man tramples | on me;\*  
 all day long an attacker op- | presses me;  
<sup>2</sup> my enemies trample on me | all day long,\*  
 for many attack me | proudly.  
<sup>3</sup> When I | am afraid,\*  
 I put my | trust in you.  
<sup>4</sup> In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust;  
 I shall not | be afraid.\*  
 What can flesh | do to me?  
 —Psalm 56:1–4

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 56*

**Old Testament Reading:**

**1 Samuel 18:10–30**

[Saul’s Jealousy of David]

<sup>10</sup>The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. <sup>11</sup>And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, “I will pin David to the wall.” But David evaded him twice.

<sup>12</sup>Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul. <sup>13</sup>So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people. <sup>14</sup>And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him. <sup>15</sup>And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in fearful awe of him. <sup>16</sup>But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them.

David Marries Michal

<sup>17</sup>Then Saul said to David, “Here is my elder daughter Merab. I will give her to you for a wife. Only be valiant for me and fight the LORD’s battles.” For Saul thought, “Let not my hand be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him.” <sup>18</sup>And David said to Saul, “Who am I, and who are my relatives, my father’s clan in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?” <sup>19</sup>But at the time when Merab, Saul’s daughter, should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife.

<sup>20</sup>Now Saul’s daughter Michal loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. <sup>21</sup>Saul thought, “Let me give her to him, that she may be a snare for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.” Therefore Saul said to David a second time, “You shall now be my son-in-law.” <sup>22</sup>And Saul commanded his servants, “Speak to David in private and say, ‘Behold, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now then become the king’s son-in-law.’” <sup>23</sup>And Saul’s servants spoke those words in the ears of David. And David said, “Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king’s son-in-law, since I am a poor man and have no reputation?” <sup>24</sup>And the servants of Saul told him, “Thus and so did David speak.” <sup>25</sup>Then Saul said, “Thus shall you say to David, ‘The king desires no bride-price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, that he may be avenged of the king’s enemies.’” Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. <sup>26</sup>And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king’s son-in-law. Before the time had expired, <sup>27</sup>David arose and went, along with his men, and killed two hundred of the Philistines.

And David brought their foreskins, which were given in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michal for a wife. <sup>28</sup>But when Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, <sup>29</sup>Saul was even more afraid of David. So Saul was David's enemy continually.

<sup>30</sup>Then the princes of the Philistines came out to battle, and as often as they came out David had more success than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was highly esteemed.

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 27:27–44**

[The Storm at Sea]

<sup>27</sup>When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. <sup>28</sup>So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. <sup>29</sup>And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. <sup>30</sup>And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship's boat into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, <sup>31</sup>Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." <sup>32</sup>Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go.

<sup>33</sup>As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. <sup>34</sup>Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of

you." <sup>35</sup>And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. <sup>36</sup>Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. <sup>37</sup>(We were in all 276 persons in the ship.) <sup>38</sup>And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea.

#### The Shipwreck

<sup>39</sup>Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore. <sup>40</sup>So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. <sup>41</sup>But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf. <sup>42</sup>The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. <sup>43</sup>But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, <sup>44</sup>and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.

#### Writing

Now about the Eucharist: This is how to give thanks: First in connection with the cup:

"We thank you, our Father, for the holy vine of David, your child, which you have revealed through Jesus, your child. To you be glory forever."

Then in connection with the piece [broken off the loaf]: "We thank you, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you

have revealed through Jesus, your child. To you be glory forever.

“As this piece [of bread] was scattered over the hills and then was brought together and made one, so let your Church be brought together from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom. For yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.”

You must not let anyone eat or drink of your Eucharist except those baptized in the Lord’s name. For in reference to this the Lord said, “Do not give what is sacred to dogs.”

After you have finished [the Sacrament], say grace in this way:

“We thank you, holy Father, for your sacred name which you have lodged in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you have revealed through Jesus, your child. To you be glory forever.

“Almighty Master, ‘you have created everything’ for the sake of your name, and have given men food and drink to enjoy that they may thank you. But to us you have given spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Jesus, your child.

“Above all, we thank you that you are mighty. To you be glory forever.

“Remember, Lord, your Church, to save it from all evil and to make it perfect by your love. Make it holy, ‘and gather’ it ‘together from the four winds’ into your Kingdom which you have made ready for it. For yours is the power and the glory forever.”

“Let Grace come and let this world pass away.”

“Hosanna to the God of David!”

—*Didache*

## Hymnody

Eternal Father, strong to save,  
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,  
Who bidd’st the mighty ocean deep  
Its own appointed limits keep:  
O hear us when we cry to Thee  
For those in peril on the sea.

—Eternal Father, Strong to Save  
(*LSB* 717:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look upon Your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L27)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession V (III)  
38–44 [159–165]

## 5 AUGUST

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, in your strength the king  
re- | joices,\*  
and in your salvation  
how greatly | he exults!

<sup>2</sup> You have given him his | heart’s desire\*  
and have not withheld  
the request | of his lips.

<sup>3</sup> For you meet him with rich | blessings;\*  
you set a crown of fine gold  
up- | on his head.

<sup>4</sup> He asked life of you; you gave | it to him,\*  
length of days forever and | ever.

<sup>5</sup> His glory is great  
through your sal- | vation;\*  
splendor and majesty  
you be- | stow on him.

<sup>6</sup> For you make him most blessed for- | ever;\*  
you make him glad with the joy  
of your | presence.

<sup>7</sup> For the king trusts | in the LORD,\*  
and through the steadfast love of the  
Most High he shall | not be moved.  
—Psalm 21:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 21*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 19:1–24

Saul Tries to Kill David

<sup>1</sup>And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. <sup>2</sup>And Jonathan told David, "Saul my father seeks to kill you. Therefore be on your guard in the morning. Stay in a secret place and hide yourself. <sup>3</sup>And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak to my father about you. And if I learn anything I will tell you." <sup>4</sup>And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you. <sup>5</sup>For he took his life in his hand and he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?" <sup>6</sup>And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan. Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." <sup>7</sup>And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan reported to him

all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before.

<sup>8</sup>And there was war again. And David went out and fought with the Philistines and struck them with a great blow, so that they fled before him. <sup>9</sup>Then a harmful spirit from the LORD came upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing the lyre. <sup>10</sup>And Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he eluded Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.

<sup>11</sup>Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, that he might kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, "If you do not escape with your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." <sup>12</sup>So Michal let David down through the window, and he fled away and escaped. <sup>13</sup>Michal took an image and laid it on the bed and put a pillow of goats' hair at its head and covered it with the clothes. <sup>14</sup>And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." <sup>15</sup>Then Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." <sup>16</sup>And when the messengers came in, behold, the image was in the bed, with the pillow of goats' hair at its head. <sup>17</sup>Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me thus and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?" And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go. Why should I kill you?'"

<sup>18</sup>Now David fled and escaped, and he came to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and lived at Naioth. <sup>19</sup>And it was told Saul, "Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah." <sup>20</sup>Then Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the company

of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. <sup>21</sup>When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. <sup>22</sup>Then he himself went to Ramah and came to the great well that is in Secu. And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" And one said, "Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah." <sup>23</sup>And he went there to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God came upon him also, and as he went he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. <sup>24</sup>And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Thus it is said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

### New Testament Reading: Acts 28:1–15

Paul on Malta

<sup>1</sup>After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. <sup>2</sup>The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. <sup>3</sup>When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. <sup>4</sup>When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." <sup>5</sup>He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. <sup>6</sup>They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune

come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

<sup>7</sup>Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. <sup>8</sup>It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him. <sup>9</sup>And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. <sup>10</sup>They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.

Paul Arrives at Rome

<sup>11</sup>After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead. <sup>12</sup>Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. <sup>13</sup>And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium. And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. <sup>14</sup>There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. <sup>15</sup>And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

### Writing

Faith places man before God. Man knows that God is calling to him. The hearing of the divine call is incompatible with the psychologizing "explanation" that man, by the power of his intellect, has lifted himself up from the conception of an angry God to the conception of a merciful, loving

Father. For just as he is unable to free himself from the powers of the world and of death that surround and restrain him . . . so he is unable to escape the “Thou shalt” of the Law, the annihilating verdict of his conscience, the baneful conflict between “shall” and “must.” But that call cannot be mere information concerning a new “concept” of God. For the mere statement that God forgives sin would, in connection with the “primal experience” (*Urerlebnis*), have to make God appear as an inconsistent Lawgiver and a softhearted Judge. To believe this would amount to substituting a sure experience of the divine wrath for a wish that is founded on nothing at all.

Actually, however, the concept of forgiveness of sins was a paraphrase of the Lutheran concept of the “righteousness of God” (*justitia Dei*), insofar as Luther himself understood this righteousness to be the righteousness given to man as a gift. Thus the concept moves at once into a greater continuity of ideas. Here, first of all, it is stated in a much more elementary manner than in the concept of forgiveness of sins alone that God, even though He forgives man for transgressing, still does not cease to demand righteousness, in any case does not desist from demanding that man must be righteous. On the one hand, of course, this intensifies the feeling that there is a contradiction. On the other hand, however, it states that the same God pronounces judgment and bestows grace.

—Werner Elert

## Hymnody

Direct, control, suggest this day  
All I design or do or say  
That all my pow’rs with all their might  
In Thy sole glory may unite.

—Awake, My Soul, with the Sun  
(*LSB* 868:5)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, You delivered us from the enemy through the death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, with whom we are united in Holy Baptism. Continue to deliver us, we pray, from our diseases and afflictions by Your merciful gift of healing as You feed us holy food and give us the cup of everlasting life to drink; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1072)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 45–50 [166–171]

## 6 AUGUST

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> It is good to give thanks | to the LORD,\*  
to sing praises to your name, | O Most  
High;
- <sup>2</sup> to declare your steadfast love  
in the | morning,\*  
and your faithful- | ness by night,
- <sup>3</sup> to the music of the lute | and the harp,\*  
to the melody | of the lyre.
- <sup>4</sup> For you, O LORD, have made me glad | by  
your work;\*  
at the works of your hands I | sing for joy.

<sup>5</sup>How great are your works, | O LORD!\*  
Your thoughts are | very deep!

<sup>6</sup>The stupid man cannot know;  
the fool cannot under- | stand this:\*  
<sup>7</sup>that though the wicked sprout like  
grass and all evildoers flourish, they are  
doomed to destruction for- | ever;

<sup>8</sup>but you, | O LORD,\*  
are on high for- | ever.

<sup>9</sup>For behold, your enemies, O LORD, for  
behold, your enemies shall | perish,\*  
all evildoers shall be | scattered.

—Psalm 92:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 92*

### Old Testament Reading:

#### 1 Samuel 20:1–23

Jonathan Warns David

<sup>1</sup>Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came and said before Jonathan, “What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?” <sup>2</sup>And he said to him, “Far from it! You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. And why should my father hide this from me? It is not so.” <sup>3</sup>But David vowed again, saying, “Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he thinks, ‘Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.’ But truly, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death.” <sup>4</sup>Then Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you say, I will do for you.” <sup>5</sup>David said to Jonathan, “Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening. <sup>6</sup>If your father misses me at all, then say, ‘David earnestly asked

leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the clan.’ <sup>7</sup>If he says, ‘Good!’ it will be well with your servant, but if he is angry, then know that harm is determined by him. <sup>8</sup>Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. But if there is guilt in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?” <sup>9</sup>And Jonathan said, “Far be it from you! If I knew that it was determined by my father that harm should come to you, would I not tell you?” <sup>10</sup>Then David said to Jonathan, “Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?” <sup>11</sup>And Jonathan said to David, “Come, let us go out into the field.” So they both went out into the field.

<sup>12</sup>And Jonathan said to David, “The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? <sup>13</sup>But should it please my father to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. <sup>14</sup>If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love of the LORD, that I may not die; <sup>15</sup>and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever, when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” <sup>16</sup>And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD take vengeance on David’s enemies.” <sup>17</sup>And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

<sup>18</sup>Then Jonathan said to him, “Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. <sup>19</sup>On the

third day go down quickly to the place where you hid yourself when the matter was in hand, and remain beside the stone heap.

<sup>20</sup>And I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I shot at a mark. <sup>21</sup>And behold, I will send the young man, saying, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to the young man, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,’ then you are to come, for, as the LORD lives, it is safe for you and there is no danger. <sup>22</sup>But if I say to the youth, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you,’ then go, for the LORD has sent you away. <sup>23</sup>And as for the matter of which you and I have spoken, behold, the LORD is between you and me forever.”

### **New Testament Reading: Acts 28:16–31**

<sup>16</sup>And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier that guarded him.

Paul in Rome

<sup>17</sup>After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. <sup>18</sup>When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. <sup>19</sup>But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation. <sup>20</sup>For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.”

<sup>21</sup>And they said to him, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. <sup>22</sup>But we desire to

hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.”

<sup>23</sup>When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. <sup>24</sup>And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. <sup>25</sup>And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

<sup>26</sup>“ ‘Go to this people, and say,  
You will indeed hear but never  
understand,

and you will indeed see but never  
perceive.

<sup>27</sup>For this people’s heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely  
hear,  
and their eyes they have closed;  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them.’

<sup>28</sup>Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.”

<sup>30</sup>He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, <sup>31</sup>proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

## Writing

Christ, in the last chapter of Luke, commands “that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name” (24:47). The Gospel convicts all people that they are under sin, that they are subject to eternal wrath and death. It offers, for Christ’s sake, forgiveness of sin and justification, which is received through faith. The preaching of repentance (which accuses us) terrifies consciences with true and grave terrors. In these matters, hearts ought to receive consolation again. This happens if they believe Christ’s promise, that for His sake we have forgiveness of sins. This faith, encouraging and consoling in these fears, receives forgiveness of sins, justifies, and gives life. For this consolation is a new <birth> and spiritual life. . . .

We speak of the kind of faith that is not an idle thought, but that liberates from death and produces a new life in hearts. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. This does not coexist with mortal sin. As long as faith is present, it produces good fruits, as we will explain later. About the conversion of the wicked, or about the way of regeneration, what can be said that is simpler and clearer? . . . [Regeneration] is received through the Word. [The Scholastics] teach just like the Anabaptists teach at this time. But God cannot be interacted with, God cannot be grasped, except through the Word. So justification happens through the Word, just as Paul says in Romans 1:16, “[The Gospel] is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” Likewise, he says in 10:17, “Faith comes from hearing.” Proof can be derived even from this: faith justifies because, if justification happens only through

the Word, and the Word is understood only by faith, it follows that faith justifies.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession IV (II) 62, 64–67

## Hymnody

With high delight  
Let us unite  
In songs of great jubilation.  
Ye pure in heart,  
All bear your part,  
Sing Jesus Christ, our salvation.  
To set us free  
Forever, He  
Is ris’n and sends  
To all earth’s ends  
Good news to save ev’ry nation.

—With High Delight, Let Us Unite  
(LSB 483:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, Paul, Your apostle to the Gentiles, proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ while in prison in Rome. In our freedom to worship You rightly, give us burning hearts when we hear Moses and the Prophets expounded before us, and open our eyes in the breaking of the bread to see You as our Savior and Lord; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1073)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 51–57 [172–178]

## 7 AUGUST

Propers for August 7–September 24 for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.

## Psalmody

- <sup>3</sup> O LORD, what is man that you re- | gard him,\*  
or the son of man  
that you | think of him?
- <sup>4</sup> Man is | like a breath,\*  
his days are like a passing | shadow.
- <sup>5</sup> Bow your heavens, O LORD,  
and | come down!\*
- Touch the mountains  
so | that they smoke!
- <sup>6</sup> Flash forth the lightning  
and | scatter them,\*  
send out your arrows and | rout them!
- <sup>7</sup> Stretch out your hand | from on high;\*,  
rescue me and deliver me from the many  
waters, from the hand of | foreigners,
- <sup>8</sup> whose mouths | speak lies\*  
and whose right hand is a right hand  
of | falsehood.
- <sup>9</sup> I will sing a new song to you, | O God;\*,  
upon a ten-stringed harp  
I will | play to you,
- <sup>10</sup> who gives victo- | ry to kings,\*  
who rescues David his servant  
from the | cruel sword.  
—Psalm 144:3–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 144*

## Old Testament Reading:

## 1 Samuel 20:24–42

<sup>24</sup>So David hid himself in the field. And when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. <sup>25</sup>The king sat on his seat, as at other times, on the seat by the wall. Jonathan

sat opposite, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty.

<sup>26</sup>Yet Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him. He is not clean; surely he is not clean." <sup>27</sup>But on the second day, the day after the new moon, David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?" <sup>28</sup>Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. <sup>29</sup>He said, 'Let me go, for our clan holds a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away and see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table."

<sup>30</sup>Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? <sup>31</sup>For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die." <sup>32</sup>Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" <sup>33</sup>But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. <sup>34</sup>And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

<sup>35</sup>In the morning Jonathan went out into the field to the appointment with David, and with him a little boy. <sup>36</sup>And he said to his boy, "Run and find the arrows that I shoot." As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. <sup>37</sup>And when the boy came to the place of

the arrow that Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the boy and said, “Is not the arrow beyond you?”<sup>38</sup> And Jonathan called after the boy, “Hurry! Be quick! Do not stay!” So Jonathan’s boy gathered up the arrows and came to his master.<sup>39</sup> But the boy knew nothing. Only Jonathan and David knew the matter.<sup>40</sup> And Jonathan gave his weapons to his boy and said to him, “Go and carry them to the city.”<sup>41</sup> And as soon as the boy had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And they kissed one another and wept with one another, David weeping the most.<sup>42</sup> Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.’” And he rose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.

*Additional Reading: 1 Samuel 21:1–23:29*

### **New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1–25**

Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,

<sup>2</sup>To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>that in every way you

were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—<sup>6</sup>even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—<sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Divisions in the Church

<sup>10</sup>I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. <sup>11</sup>For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. <sup>12</sup>What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” <sup>13</sup>Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup>I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup>so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup>(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) <sup>17</sup>For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God

<sup>18</sup>For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

### Writing

O compassionate and merciful, long-suffering, and very gracious and true God, look from Your prepared dwelling-place, and hear Your suppliants, and deliver us from every temptation of the devil and of man. Do not withhold Your aid from us, nor bring on us chastisements too heavy for our strength. We are unable to overcome what is opposed to us, but You are able, Lord, to save us from everything that is against us. Save us, O God, from the difficulties of this world, according to Your goodness. Save us, who have come with a pure conscience to Your holy altar, that we may offer without condemnation the blessed thrice-holy hymn together with the heavenly powers. Save us, that having performed the service, well pleasing to You and divine, we may be counted worthy of eternal life.

Because You, Lord our God, are holy, and because You dwell and abide in holy places, we offer the praise and the thrice-holy hymn to Your, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to all eternity.

Holy God, Holy [and] Strong, Holy [and] Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy [and] Strong, Holy [and] Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy [and] Strong, Holy [and] Immortal, have mercy on us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

—Liturgy of Saint James

### Hymnody

Wisdom's highest, noblest treasure,  
Jesus, is revealed in You.

Let me find in You my pleasure,  
And my wayward will subdue,  
Humility there and simplicity reigning,  
In paths of true wisdom my steps ever  
training.

If I learn from Jesus this knowledge divine,  
The blessing of heavenly wisdom is mine.

—One Thing's Needful (*LSB* 536:3)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, whose infinite love restores to the right way those who err, gathers the scattered, and preserves those whom You have gathered, of Your tender mercy pour out on Your Christian people the grace of unity that all schisms being healed, Your flock, gathered to the true Shepherd of Your Church, may serve You in all faithfulness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1155)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession V (III)  
58–61 [179–182]

## 8 AUGUST

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>For God alone my soul waits in | silence;\*  
from him comes my sal- | vation.

<sup>2</sup>He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my | fortress;\*  
I shall not be greatly | shaken.

<sup>3</sup>How long will all of you attack a man  
to | batter him,\*  
like a leaning wall, a | tottering fence?

<sup>4</sup>They only plan to thrust him down  
from his high position. They take pleasure  
in | falsehood.\*  
They bless with their mouths, but  
inwardly | they curse.

<sup>5</sup>For God alone, O my soul, wait in | silence,\*  
for my hope is | from him.

<sup>6</sup>He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my | fortress;\*  
I shall not be | shaken.

<sup>7</sup>On God rests my salvation and my | glory;\*  
my mighty rock, my refuge | is God.  
—Psalm 62:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 62*

## Old Testament Reading:

## 1 Samuel 24:1–22

David Spares Saul's Life

<sup>1</sup>When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." <sup>2</sup>Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks. <sup>3</sup>And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. <sup>4</sup>And the men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which

the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'" Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. <sup>5</sup>And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. <sup>6</sup>He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed." <sup>7</sup>So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

<sup>8</sup>Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. <sup>9</sup>And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Behold, David seeks your harm'?" <sup>10</sup>Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.' <sup>11</sup>See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. <sup>12</sup>May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you. <sup>13</sup>As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes wickedness.' But my hand shall not be against you. <sup>14</sup>After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea! <sup>15</sup>May the LORD therefore be judge and give

sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand.”

<sup>16</sup>As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, “Is this your voice, my son David?” And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. <sup>17</sup>He said to David, “You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. <sup>18</sup>And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands. <sup>19</sup>For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. <sup>20</sup>And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. <sup>21</sup>Swear to me therefore by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father’s house.” <sup>22</sup>And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

### **New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:26–2:16**

[Christ the Wisdom and Power of God]

<sup>26</sup>For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became

to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup>so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Proclaiming Christ Crucified

<sup>2:1</sup>And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, <sup>4</sup>and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup>that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Wisdom from the Spirit

<sup>6</sup>Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. <sup>7</sup>But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—

<sup>10</sup>these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup>For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from

God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup>And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

<sup>14</sup>The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup>The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. <sup>16</sup>“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

### Writing

Romans 4:16 says, “That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed.” It is as though he says, “If the matter were to depend on our merits, the promise would be uncertain and useless. For we never could determine when we would have enough merit.” Experienced consciences can easily understand this. So Paul says in Galatians 3:22, “But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.” He takes merit away from us because he says that all are guilty and included under sin. Then he adds that the promise (namely, forgiveness of sins and justification) is given, and he shows how the promise can be received—by faith. This reasoning, derived from the nature of a promise, is the chief reasoning in Paul and is often repeated. . . . Let not good minds allow themselves to be forced from the conviction that we receive forgiveness of sins for Christ’s sake, through faith alone. In this they have sure and firm consolation against the terrors

of sin, against eternal death, and against all the gates of hell.

Since we receive forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit through faith alone, faith alone justifies. For those reconciled are counted as righteous and as God’s children. This is not because of their own purity, but through mercy for Christ’s sake, provided only that they receive this mercy through faith. So Scripture testifies that *by faith we are accounted righteous* (Romans 3:26). We will add testimonies that clearly declare that faith is that very righteousness through which we are accounted righteous before God. This is not because faith is a work that is worthy in itself. It is because faith receives the promise by which God has declared that, for Christ’s sake, He wishes to show favor to those believing in Him, or because God knows that Christ Jesus was “made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession IV (II) 84–86

### Hymnody

Your light to ev’ry thought impart,  
And shed Your love in ev’ry heart;  
The weakness of our mortal state  
With deathless might invigorate.

—Come Holy Ghost, Creator Blest  
(LSB 498:4)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, whose strength is made perfect in weakness, grant us humility and childlike faith that we may please You in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B78)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 62–67 [183–188]

### 9 AUGUST

#### Psalmody

- <sup>8</sup> Understand, O dullest of the | people!\*  
Fools, when will | you be wise?
- <sup>9</sup> He who planted the ear, does | he not hear?\*
- He who formed the eye, does | he  
not see?
- <sup>10</sup> He who disciplines the nations,  
does he | not rebuke?\*
- He who teaches man | knowledge—
- <sup>11</sup> the LORD—knows the | thoughts of man,\*  
that they are | but a breath.
- <sup>12</sup> Blessèd is the man whom you  
discipline, | O LORD,\*  
and whom you teach out | of your law,  
<sup>13</sup> to give him rest from days of | trouble,\*  
until a pit is dug for the | wicked.
- <sup>14</sup> For the LORD will not forsake his | people;\*
- he will not abandon his | heritage;
- <sup>15</sup> for justice will return to the | righteous,\*  
and all the upright in heart  
will | follow it.
- Psalm 94:8–15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 94*

#### Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 25:1–22

The Death of Samuel

<sup>1</sup>Now Samuel died. And all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and they buried him in his house at Ramah.

David and Abigail

Then David rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran. <sup>2</sup>And there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel. <sup>3</sup>Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. The woman was discerning and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite. <sup>4</sup>David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep. <sup>5</sup>So David sent ten young men. And David said to the young men, “Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal and greet him in my name. <sup>6</sup>And thus you shall greet him: ‘Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. <sup>7</sup>I hear that you have shearers. Now your shepherds have been with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing all the time they were in Carmel. <sup>8</sup>Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.’”

<sup>9</sup>When David’s young men came, they said all this to Nabal in the name of David, and then they waited. <sup>10</sup>And Nabal answered David’s servants, “Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters. <sup>11</sup>Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers and give it to men who come from I do not know where?” <sup>12</sup>So David’s young men turned away and came back and told him all this. <sup>13</sup>And David said to his men, “Every man strap on his sword!” And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword. And about four

hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage.

<sup>14</sup>But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them. <sup>15</sup>Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them. <sup>16</sup>They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. <sup>17</sup>Now therefore know this and consider what you should do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his house, and he is such a worthless man that one cannot speak to him."

<sup>18</sup>Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. <sup>19</sup>And she said to her young men, "Go on before me; behold, I come after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. <sup>20</sup>And as she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain, behold, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them. <sup>21</sup>Now David had said, "Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good. <sup>22</sup>God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him."

## New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1–23

Divisions in the Church

<sup>1</sup>But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, <sup>3</sup>for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? <sup>4</sup>For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

<sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. <sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup>So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. <sup>8</sup>He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. <sup>9</sup>For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

<sup>10</sup>According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. <sup>11</sup>For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup>Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—<sup>13</sup>each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. <sup>14</sup>If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup>If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

<sup>16</sup>Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? <sup>17</sup>If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

<sup>18</sup>Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. <sup>19</sup>For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," <sup>20</sup>and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." <sup>21</sup>So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, <sup>22</sup>whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, <sup>23</sup>and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

## Writing

Good works are to be done because of God's command and for the exercise of faith—confessing the faith and giving thanks. . . . Because of Christ, they are holy, divine works, sacrifices, and acts belonging to the rule of Christ, who in this way displays His kingdom before this world. . . . In order to retain the Gospel among people, He openly sets the confession of saints against the kingdom of the devil and, in our weakness, declares His power. Consider the dangers, labors, and sermons of the apostle Paul, of Athanasius, Augustine, and the rest who taught the churches. These deeds are holy works and true sacrifices acceptable to God. They are Christ's battles [Colossians 2:15] through which He repressed the devil and drove him away from those who believed. David's labors, in waging wars and in his home government, are holy works, true sacrifices, and battles fought by God. They defend the people who had God's

Word against the devil, in order that the knowledge of God might not be entirely extinguished on earth. We think this way also about every good work in the humblest callings and in private affairs. . . . To demean such works (the confession of doctrine, sufferings, works of love, suppression of the flesh) would be to demean the outward rule of Christ's kingdom among people. Here also we add something about rewards and merits. We teach that rewards have been offered and promised for the works of believers. We teach that good works have merit, not for forgiveness of sins, for grace, or for justification (for these we receive only through faith), but for other rewards, bodily and spiritual, in this life and after this life. For Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:8, "Each will receive his wages according to his labor." There will be different rewards according to different labors. But forgiveness of sins is given alike and equal to all people, just as Christ is one, and is offered freely to all who believe that for His sake their sins are forgiven.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 68–74 [189–195]

## Hymnody

O Holy Spirit, enter in,  
And in our hearts Your work begin,  
Your dwelling place now make us.  
Sun of the soul, O Light divine,  
Around and in us brightly shine,  
To joy and gladness wake us  
That we may be  
Truly living,  
To You giving  
Prayer unceasing  
And in love be still increasing.

—O Holy Spirit, Enter In (*LSB* 913:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, You have joined us to Yourself in Holy Baptism and made our bodies a temple of Your Holy Spirit. May the fruit of the Spirit be born in our bodies as we show forth in the world Your love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, for against such things there is no law; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1074)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 68–73 [189–194]

## 10 AUGUST

*Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>The fool says in his heart,  
“There | is no God.”\*  
They are corrupt, they do abominable  
deeds, there is none | who does good.
- <sup>2</sup>The LORD looks down from heaven  
on the chil- | dren of man,\*  
to see if there are any who understand,  
who seek | after God.
- <sup>3</sup>They have all turned aside;  
together they have be- | come corrupt;\*  
there is none who does good,  
not | even one.
- <sup>4</sup>Have they no knowledge,  
all the evil- | doers\*  
who eat up my people as they eat bread  
and do not call up- | on the LORD?
- <sup>5</sup>There they are in great | terror,\*

for God is with the generation  
of the | righteous.

<sup>6</sup>You would shame the plans | of the poor,\*  
but the LORD is his | refuge.

<sup>7</sup>Oh, that salvation for Israel  
would come out of | Zion!\*

When the LORD restores the fortunes  
of his people, let Jacob rejoice,  
let Israel | be glad.

—Psalm 14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 53*

## Old Testament Reading:

### 1 Samuel 25:23–44

[David and Abigail]

<sup>23</sup>When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. <sup>24</sup>She fell at his feet and said, “On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. <sup>25</sup>Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. <sup>26</sup>Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, because the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. <sup>27</sup>And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. <sup>28</sup>Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. <sup>29</sup>If men rise up to pursue you and to seek

your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the LORD your God. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling. <sup>30</sup>And when the LORD has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, <sup>31</sup>my lord shall have no cause of grief or pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause or for my lord taking vengeance himself. And when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant.”

<sup>32</sup>And David said to Abigail, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! <sup>33</sup>Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from avenging myself with my own hand! <sup>34</sup>For as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male.” <sup>35</sup>Then David received from her hand what she had brought him. And he said to her, “Go up in peace to your house. See, I have obeyed your voice, and I have granted your petition.”

<sup>36</sup>And Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until the morning light. <sup>37</sup>In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. <sup>38</sup>And about ten days later the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.

<sup>39</sup>When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Blessed be the LORD who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of

Nabal, and has kept back his servant from wrongdoing. The LORD has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head.” Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife. <sup>40</sup>When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, “David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife.” <sup>41</sup>And she rose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, “Behold, your handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.” <sup>42</sup>And Abigail hurried and rose and mounted a donkey, and her five young women attended her. She followed the messengers of David and became his wife.

<sup>43</sup>David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them became his wives. <sup>44</sup>Saul had given Michal his daughter, David’s wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.

## **New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 4:1–21**

The Ministry of Apostles

<sup>1</sup>This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup>Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. <sup>3</sup>But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. <sup>4</sup>For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. <sup>5</sup>Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

<sup>6</sup>I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up

in favor of one against another. <sup>7</sup>For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

<sup>8</sup>Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! <sup>9</sup>For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. <sup>10</sup>We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. <sup>11</sup>To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, <sup>12</sup>and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; <sup>13</sup>when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

<sup>14</sup>I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. <sup>15</sup>For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. <sup>16</sup>I urge you, then, be imitators of me. <sup>17</sup>That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. <sup>18</sup>Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. <sup>19</sup>But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. <sup>20</sup>For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. <sup>21</sup>What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

## Writing

I will here briefly recount these articles of the Christian faith to which everyone is above all things to pay attention and hold fast.

The first is the law of God, which is to be preached so that one thereby reveals and teaches how to recognize sin (Rom. 3[:20] and 7[:7]), . . . For this means a truly spiritual preaching of the law, as Paul says in Rom. 7[:14], and a right use of the law, as he says in I Tim. 1[:8].

Secondly, when now sin is recognized and the law is so preached that the conscience is alarmed and humbled before God's wrath, we are then to preach the comforting word of the gospel and the forgiveness of sins, so that the conscience again may be comforted and established in the grace of God, etc.

Christ himself teaches these two articles in such an order (Luke 24[:47]). One must preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins in his name. "And the Spirit (he says in John [16:8]) will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment."

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

And thus I live in God contented  
 And die without a thought of fear;  
 My soul has to God's plans consented,  
 For through His Son my faith is clear.  
 O God, for Jesus' sake I pray  
 Your peace may bless my dying day.

—Once in the Blest Baptismal Waters  
 (LSB 598:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You called Lawrence to be a deacon in Your Church to serve Your saints with deeds of love, and You gave him the crown of martyrdom. Give us the same charity of heart that we may fulfill Your love by defending and supporting the poor, that by loving them we may love You with all our hearts; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1075)

## Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr

Early in the third century AD, Lawrence, most likely born in Spain, made his way to Rome. There he was appointed chief of the seven deacons and was given the responsibility to manage Church property and finances. The emperor at the time, who thought that the Church had valuable things worth confiscating, ordered Lawrence to produce the “treasures of the Church.” Lawrence brought before the emperor the poor whose lives had been touched by Christian charity. He was then jailed and eventually executed in the year AD 258 by being roasted on a gridiron. His martyrdom left a deep impression on the young Church. Almost immediately, the date of his death, August 10, became a permanent fixture on the early commemorative calendar of the Church.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession V (III) 74–81 [195–202]

## 11 AUGUST

### Psalmody

- <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, | O God,\*  
and renew a right spirit with- | in me.
- <sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from your | presence,\*  
and take not your Holy Spirit | from me.
- <sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your sal- | vation,\*  
and uphold me with a willing | spirit.
- <sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors | your ways,\*  
and sinners will re- | turn to you.
- Psalm 51:10–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 51*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 26:1–25

David Spares Saul Again

<sup>1</sup>Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, “Is not David hiding himself on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the east of Jeshimon?” <sup>2</sup>So Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph with three thousand chosen men of Israel to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. <sup>3</sup>And Saul encamped on the hill of Hachilah, which is beside the road on the east of Jeshimon. But David remained in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness, <sup>4</sup>David sent out spies and learned that Saul had come. <sup>5</sup>Then David rose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, with Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Saul was lying within the encampment, while the army was encamped around him.

<sup>6</sup>Then David said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Joab’s brother Abishai the son of Zeruiah, “Who will go down with me into

the camp to Saul?” And Abishai said, “I will go down with you.”<sup>7</sup> So David and Abishai went to the army by night. And there lay Saul sleeping within the encampment, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the army lay around him.<sup>8</sup> Then said Abishai to David, “God has given your enemy into your hand this day. Now please let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear, and I will not strike him twice.”<sup>9</sup> But David said to Abishai, “Do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless?”<sup>10</sup> And David said, “As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish.<sup>11</sup> The LORD forbid that I should put out my hand against the LORD’s anointed. But take now the spear that is at his head and the jar of water, and let us go.”<sup>12</sup> So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul’s head, and they went away. No man saw it or knew it, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen upon them.

<sup>13</sup>Then David went over to the other side and stood far off on the top of the hill, with a great space between them.<sup>14</sup> And David called to the army, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, “Will you not answer, Abner?” Then Abner answered, “Who are you who calls to the king?”<sup>15</sup> And David said to Abner, “Are you not a man? Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy the king your lord.<sup>16</sup> This thing that you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not kept watch over your lord, the LORD’s anointed. And now see where the king’s spear is and the jar of water that was at his head.”

<sup>17</sup>Saul recognized David’s voice and said, “Is this your voice, my son David?” And David said, “It is my voice, my lord, O king.”

<sup>18</sup>And he said, “Why does my lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done? What evil is on my hands?<sup>19</sup> Now therefore let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it is the Lord who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering, but if it is men, may they be cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the LORD, saying, ‘Go, serve other gods.’<sup>20</sup> Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the LORD, for the king of Israel has come out to seek a single flea like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains.”

<sup>21</sup>Then Saul said, “I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Behold, I have acted foolishly, and have made a great mistake.”<sup>22</sup> And David answered and said, “Here is the spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and take it.<sup>23</sup> The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the LORD gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the LORD’s anointed.<sup>24</sup> Behold, as your life was precious this day in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the LORD, and may he deliver me out of all tribulation.”<sup>25</sup> Then Saul said to David, “Blessed be you, my son David! You will do many things and will succeed in them.” So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

*Additional Reading: 1 Samuel 27:1–28:2*

## New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 5:1–13

### Sexual Immorality Defiles the Church

<sup>1</sup>It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. <sup>2</sup>And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

<sup>3</sup>For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. <sup>4</sup>When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, <sup>5</sup>you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup>Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? <sup>7</sup>Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

<sup>9</sup>I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—<sup>10</sup>not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. <sup>11</sup>But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. <sup>12</sup>For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? <sup>13</sup>God judges

those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

### Writing

The Gospel is properly the doctrine of the person and office or benefits of Christ. But this doctrine consists most of all in these chief parts:

I. That the Son of God, before the world of time, was, by a wonderful decree made in the hidden counsel of the Trinity, appointed to be our Mediator, Redeemer, Reconciler, and Savior.

II. That this decree was revealed by the word of promise immediately after the Fall, and the promise of the coming Messiah gradually renewed and repeated to the fathers during the whole time of the Old Testament.

III. Likewise that the Son of God, according to the promise, was made man in the fullness of time and most perfectly completed the work of redemption and reconciliation by His obedience, passion, and death, and thus gained righteousness and life eternal, by His resurrection and ascension, for those who believe in Him.

IV. The Gospel does not only set forth the account of Christ in story form, but the proper doctrine of Him is the promise of grace, by which God, in the Word and the Sacraments, sets before and offers to miserable sinners—thoroughly terrified by the knowledge of sins and of divine wrath and damnation—grace, remission of sins, adoption, and the inheritance of life eternal freely and out of pure mercy or grace, without our merit, only for the sake of the obedience, passion, death, and merit of Christ.

V. The Gospel teaches that these benefits of Christ the Mediator are to be apprehended and applied by faith.

VI. The Gospel declares those who believe righteous and saved.  
—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

Let hearts be purged of evil  
That we may see aright  
The Lord in rays eternal  
Of resurrection light  
And, list'ning to His accents,  
May hear, so calm and plain,  
His own "All hail!" and, hearing,  
May raise the victor strain.  
—The Day of Resurrection (*LSB* 478:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of the end of all things and the day of Your just judgment, we may be stirred up to holiness of living here and dwell with You forever hereafter; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H86)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 82–88 [203–209]

## 12 AUGUST

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>The LORD reigns; let the peoples | tremble!\*  
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim;  
let the | earth quake!
- <sup>2</sup>The LORD is great in | Zion;\*  
he is exalted over all the | peoples.
- <sup>3</sup>Let them praise your great  
and | awesome name!\*
- Ho- | ly is he!
- <sup>4</sup>The King in his might loves | justice.\*  
You have established equity; you have  
executed justice and righteousness  
in | Jacob.
- <sup>5</sup>Exalt the LORD our God;  
worship at his | footstool!\*
- Ho- | ly is he!  
—Psalm 99:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 99*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 28:3–25

Saul and the Medium of En-dor

<sup>3</sup>Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the necromancers out of the land.

<sup>4</sup>The Philistines assembled and came and encamped at Shunem. And Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa. <sup>5</sup>When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. <sup>6</sup>And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. <sup>7</sup>Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of

her.” And his servants said to him, “Behold, there is a medium at En-dor.”

<sup>8</sup>So Saul disguised himself and put on other garments and went, he and two men with him. And they came to the woman by night. And he said, “Divine for me by a spirit and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you.” <sup>9</sup>The woman said to him, “Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the necromancers from the land. Why then are you laying a trap for my life to bring about my death?” <sup>10</sup>But Saul swore to her by the LORD, “As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.” <sup>11</sup>Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” He said, “Bring up Samuel for me.” <sup>12</sup>When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? You are Saul.” <sup>13</sup>The king said to her, “Do not be afraid. What do you see?” And the woman said to Saul, “I see a god coming up out of the earth.” <sup>14</sup>He said to her, “What is his appearance?” And she said, “An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe.” And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage.

<sup>15</sup>Then Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” Saul answered, “I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do.” <sup>16</sup>And Samuel said, “Why then do you ask me, since the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy? <sup>17</sup>The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me, for the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor,

David. <sup>18</sup>Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. <sup>19</sup>Moreover, the LORD will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me. The LORD will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines.”

<sup>20</sup>Then Saul fell at once full length on the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night. <sup>21</sup>And the woman came to Saul, and when she saw that he was terrified, she said to him, “Behold, your servant has obeyed you. I have taken my life in my hand and have listened to what you have said to me. <sup>22</sup>Now therefore, you also obey your servant. Let me set a morsel of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength when you go on your way.” <sup>23</sup>He refused and said, “I will not eat.” But his servants, together with the woman, urged him, and he listened to their words. So he arose from the earth and sat on the bed. <sup>24</sup>Now the woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she quickly killed it, and she took flour and kneaded it and baked unleavened bread of it, <sup>25</sup>and she put it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

*Additional Reading: 1 Samuel 29:1–30:31*

### **New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 6:1–20**

#### **Lawsuits Against Believers**

<sup>1</sup>When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? <sup>2</sup>Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?

And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! <sup>4</sup>So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? <sup>5</sup>I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, <sup>6</sup>but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? <sup>7</sup>To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? <sup>8</sup>But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!

<sup>9</sup>Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, <sup>10</sup>nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

#### Flee Sexual Immorality

<sup>12</sup>“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything. <sup>13</sup>“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup>And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. <sup>15</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make

them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup>Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” <sup>17</sup>But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup>Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup>for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

#### Writing

Oh, what mad, senseless fools are we! While we must ever live and dwell among such mighty enemies as the devils, we still despise our weapons and defense [2 Corinthians 10:4], and we are too lazy to look at or think of them!

What else are such proud, arrogant saints doing who are unwilling to read and study the catechism daily? They think they are much more learned than God Himself with all His saints, angels, prophets, apostles, and all Christians. God Himself is not ashamed to teach these things daily. He knows nothing better to teach. He always keeps teaching the same thing and does not take up anything new or different. All the saints know nothing better or different to learn and cannot finish learning this. Are we not the finest of all fellows to imagine that if we have once read or heard the catechism, we know it all and have no further need to read and learn? Can we finish learning in one hour what God Himself cannot finish teaching? He is engaged in teaching this from the beginning to the end of the world.

All prophets, together with all saints, have been busy learning it, have ever remained students, and must continue to be students.

It must be true that whoever knows the Ten Commandments perfectly must know all the Scriptures [Matthew 7:12]. So, in all matters and cases, he can advise, help, comfort, judge, and decide both spiritual and temporal matters. Such a person must be qualified to sit in judgment over all doctrines, estates, spirits, laws, and whatever else is in the world [1 Corinthians 6:2–3]. And what, indeed, is the entire Book of Psalms but thoughts and exercises upon the First Commandment? Now I truly know that such lazy “bellies” and arrogant spirits do not understand a single psalm, much less the entire Holy Scriptures. Yet they pretend to know and despise the catechism, which is a short and brief summary of all the Holy Scriptures.

—Large Catechism Longer Preface  
15–18

### Hymnody

Thy death, not mine, O Christ,  
Has paid the ransom due;  
Ten thousand deaths like mine  
Would have been all too few.  
To whom save Thee,  
Who canst alone  
For sin atone,  
Lord, shall I flee?

—Thy Works, Not Mine, O Christ  
(LSB 565:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy

Spirit that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (211)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 89–96 [210–217]

## 13 AUGUST

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> God shall arise,  
his enemies shall be | scattered;\*  
and those who hate him shall  
flee be- | fore him!
- <sup>2</sup> As smoke is driven away,  
so you shall drive | them away;\*  
as wax melts before fire, so the wicked  
shall perish be- | fore God!
- <sup>3</sup> But the righteous shall be glad;  
they shall exult be- | fore God;\*  
they shall be jubilant | with joy!
- <sup>4</sup> Sing to God, sing praises | to his name;\*  
lift up a song to him who rides through  
the deserts; his name is the LORD;  
exult be- | fore him!
- <sup>5</sup> Father of the fatherless and protector  
of | widows\*  
is God in his holy habi- | tation.
- <sup>6</sup> God settles the solitary in a home; he leads  
out the prisoners to pros- | perity,\*  
but the rebellious dwell  
in a | parched land.  
—Psalm 68:1–6

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 68*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**1 Samuel 31:1–13**

The Death of Saul

<sup>1</sup>Now the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. <sup>2</sup>And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. <sup>3</sup>The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by the archers. <sup>4</sup>Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, “Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and mistreat me.” But his armor-bearer would not, for he feared greatly. Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it. <sup>5</sup>And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with him. <sup>6</sup>Thus Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, on the same day together. <sup>7</sup>And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and those beyond the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities and fled. And the Philistines came and lived in them.

<sup>8</sup>The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. <sup>9</sup>So they cut off his head and stripped off his armor and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to the people. <sup>10</sup>They put his armor in the temple of Ashtaroth, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. <sup>11</sup>But when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, <sup>12</sup>all the valiant men arose and

went all night and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. <sup>13</sup>And they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh and fasted seven days.

**New Testament Reading:**  
**1 Corinthians 7:1–24**

Principles for Marriage

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” <sup>2</sup>But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. <sup>3</sup>The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup>For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. <sup>5</sup>Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

<sup>6</sup>Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. <sup>7</sup>I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

<sup>8</sup>To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. <sup>9</sup>But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

<sup>10</sup>To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband <sup>11</sup>(but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be

reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

<sup>12</sup>To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. <sup>13</sup>If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. <sup>14</sup>For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. <sup>15</sup>But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. <sup>16</sup>For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Live as You Are Called

<sup>17</sup>Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. <sup>18</sup>Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. <sup>19</sup>For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. <sup>20</sup>Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. <sup>21</sup>Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) <sup>22</sup>For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. <sup>23</sup>You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. <sup>24</sup>So,

brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

## Writing

The death of Our Lord is often referred to in Scripture exceedingly clearly. This is so that none would lack instruction in the actual events and thereby err. The prophets were not afraid to mention the cause of His death, even though that death would be at the hands of the people to whom they preached, for He suffers not for His own sake but for the immortality and salvation of all. They say then: "A man in stripes, and knowing how to bear weakness, for His face is turned away: He was dishonored and held in no account. He bears our sins and is in pain on our account; and we reckoned Him to be in labor and in stripes and in ill usage. But He was wounded for our sins and made weak for our wickedness. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we were healed." Marvel at the loving-kindness of the Word, that for our sakes He is dishonored so that we may be brought to honor. "For we all," it says, "like sheep were gone astray. All mankind had erred in its way, and the Lord delivered Christ for our sins. And He does not open His mouth, though He has been evilly mistreated. As a sheep He was brought to the slaughter, and as a lamb is dumb before the shearer, so He did not open His mouth. By His abasement He took away God's judgment against mankind." Then, so that none would conceive from His suffering that He is but a common man, Holy Scripture anticipates the vain imaginings of the heart and declares His exceeding power and the difference of His nature compared with ourselves, saying: "But who shall declare His generation? For His life

is taken away. From the wickedness of the people He was brought to death . . . for He did no wickedness, neither was guile found in His mouth. And the Lord will cleanse Him from His stripes.”

—Athanasius

### Hymnody

“Be faithful to your marriage vow;  
No lust or impure thoughts allow.  
Keep all your conduct free from sin  
By self-controlled discipline.”  
Have mercy, Lord!

—These Are the Holy Ten Commands  
(LSB 581:7)

### Prayer of the Day

Most gracious God, we give thanks for the joy and blessings that You grant to husbands and wives. Assist them always by Your grace that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep their marriage vows, grow in love toward You and for each other, and come at last to the eternal joys that You have promised; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (243)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 97–103 [218–224]

## 14 AUGUST

### Psalmody

<sup>13</sup>The LORD looks down from | heaven;\*  
he sees all the chil- | dren of man;  
<sup>14</sup>from where he sits enthroned  
he | looks out\*  
on all the inhabitants | of the earth,

<sup>15</sup>he who fashions the hearts | of them all\*  
and observes | all their deeds.

<sup>16</sup>The king is not saved by his great | army;\*  
a warrior is not delivered  
by his | great strength.

<sup>17</sup>The war horse is a false hope  
for sal- | vation,\*  
and by its great might it cannot | rescue.

<sup>18</sup>Behold, the eye of the LORD  
is on those who | fear him,\*  
on those who hope in his | steadfast love,

<sup>19</sup>that he may deliver their | soul from death\*  
and keep them alive in | famine.

<sup>20</sup>Our soul waits | for the LORD;\*  
he is our help | and our shield.

<sup>21</sup>For our heart is | glad in him,\*  
because we trust in his | holy name.

—Psalm 33:13–21

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 33*

### Old Testament Reading: 2 Samuel 1:1–27

David Hears of Saul's Death

<sup>1</sup>After the death of Saul, when David had returned from striking down the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag. <sup>2</sup>And on the third day, behold, a man came from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. And when he came to David, he fell to the ground and paid homage. <sup>3</sup>David said to him, "Where do you come from?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." <sup>4</sup>And David said to him, "How did it go? Tell me." And he answered, "The people fled from the battle, and also many of the people have fallen and are dead, and Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead." <sup>5</sup>Then David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" <sup>6</sup>And the young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on

Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul leaning on his spear, and behold, the chariots and the horsemen were close upon him. <sup>7</sup>And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' <sup>8</sup>And he said to me, 'Who are you?' I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' <sup>9</sup>And he said to me 'Stand beside me and kill me, for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers.' <sup>10</sup>So I stood beside him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head and the armlet that was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord."

<sup>11</sup>Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. <sup>12</sup>And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. <sup>13</sup>And David said to the young man who told him, "Where do you come from?" And he answered, "I am the son of a sojourner, an Amalekite." <sup>14</sup>David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" <sup>15</sup>Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go, execute him." And he struck him down so that he died. <sup>16</sup>And David said to him, "Your blood be on your head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed.'"

David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan

<sup>17</sup>And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan his son, <sup>18</sup>and he said it should be taught to the people of Judah; behold, it is written in the Book of Jashar. He said:

<sup>19</sup>"Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places!

How the mighty have fallen!

<sup>20</sup>Tell it not in Gath,  
publish it not in the streets  
of Ashkelon,  
lest the daughters of the Philistines  
rejoice,  
lest the daughters of the  
uncircumcised exult.

<sup>21</sup>"You mountains of Gilboa,  
let there be no dew or rain upon you,  
nor fields of offerings!  
For there the shield of the mighty was  
defiled,  
the shield of Saul, not anointed  
with oil.

<sup>22</sup>"From the blood of the slain,  
from the fat of the mighty,  
the bow of Jonathan turned not back,  
and the sword of Saul returned  
not empty.

<sup>23</sup>"Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!  
In life and in death  
they were not divided;  
they were swifter than eagles;  
they were stronger than lions.

<sup>24</sup>"You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,  
who clothed you luxuriously  
in scarlet,  
who put ornaments of gold  
on your apparel.

<sup>25</sup>"How the mighty have fallen  
in the midst of the battle!

"Jonathan lies slain on your high places.

<sup>26</sup>I am distressed for you,  
my brother Jonathan;  
very pleasant have you been to me;  
your love to me was extraordinary,  
surpassing the love of women.

<sup>27</sup>“How the mighty have fallen,  
and the weapons of war perished!”

### New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 7:25–40

#### The Unmarried and the Widowed

<sup>25</sup>Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy. <sup>26</sup>I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. <sup>27</sup>Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. <sup>28</sup>But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. <sup>29</sup>This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, <sup>30</sup>and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, <sup>31</sup>and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

<sup>32</sup>I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, <sup>34</sup>and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. <sup>35</sup>I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote

good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

<sup>36</sup>If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. <sup>37</sup>But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. <sup>38</sup>So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

<sup>39</sup>A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. <sup>40</sup>Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

### Writing

Complaints about unchaste priests are common. Platina writes that it is for this reason that Pope Pius is reported to have said that although there are reasons why marriage was taken away from priests, there are far more important reasons why it should be given back. Since our priests wanted to avoid these open scandals, they married wives and taught that it was lawful for them to enter into marriage. First, because Paul says, “Because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife” and “It is better to marry than to be aflame with passion” (1 Corinthians 7:2, 9b).

Second, Christ says, “Not everyone can receive this saying” (Matthew 19:11), where He teaches that not everyone is able to lead a single life. God created human beings for procreation (Genesis 1:28). It is not within a

person's power, without God giving a unique gift, to change this creation. ‹For it is clear, as many have confessed, that no good, honest, chaste life, no Christian, sincere, upright conduct has resulted from the attempt to lead a single life. Instead, a horrible, fearful unrest and torment of conscience has been felt by many until the end.› Therefore, those who are not able to lead a single life ought to marry. No human law, no vow, can destroy God's commandment and ordinance. For these reasons the priests teach that it is lawful for them to marry wives.

—Augsburg Confession XXIII 1–9

### Hymnody

Preserve the vow these two shall make,  
This circle round their life,  
This golden ring that none may break  
Which makes them husband, wife.

—Lord, When You Came as Welcome  
Guest (*LSB* 859:3)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, keep Your Church with Your perpetual mercy; and because of our frailty we cannot but fall, keep us ever by Your help from all things hurtful and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H74)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 104–111 [225–232]

## 15 AUGUST

*St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord*

### Psalmody

<sup>11</sup> The LORD swore to David a sure oath  
from which he will | not turn back:\*

“One of the sons of your body  
I will set | on your throne.

<sup>12</sup> If your sons keep my covenant and my  
testimonies that I shall | teach them,\*  
their sons also forever  
shall sit | on your throne.”

<sup>13</sup> For the LORD has chosen | Zion;\*  
he has desired it for his | dwelling place:

<sup>14</sup> “This is my resting place for- | ever;\*  
here I will dwell, for I have de- | sired it.

<sup>15</sup> I will abundantly bless her pro- | visions;\*  
I will satisfy her | poor with bread.

<sup>16</sup> Her priests I will clothe with sal- | vation,\*  
and her saints will | shout for joy.

<sup>17</sup> There I will make a horn  
to sprout for | David;\*  
I have prepared a lamp  
for my a- | nointed.

<sup>18</sup> His enemies I will | clothe with shame,\*  
but on him his | crown will shine.”

—Psalm 132:11–18

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 132*

### Old Testament Reading: 2 Samuel 5:1–25

David Anointed King of Israel

<sup>1</sup>Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Behold, we are your bone and flesh. <sup>2</sup>In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD said to you, ‘You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.’”

<sup>3</sup>So all the elders of Israel came to the king

at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. <sup>4</sup>David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. <sup>5</sup>At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

<sup>6</sup>And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, “You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off”—thinking, “David cannot come in here.” <sup>7</sup>Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. <sup>8</sup>And David said on that day, “Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack ‘the lame and the blind,’ who are hated by David’s soul.” Therefore it is said, “The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.” <sup>9</sup>And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward. <sup>10</sup>And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

<sup>11</sup>And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also carpenters and masons who built David a house. <sup>12</sup>And David knew that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

<sup>13</sup>And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David. <sup>14</sup>And these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, <sup>15</sup>Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, <sup>16</sup>Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

David Defeats the Philistines

<sup>17</sup>When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. But David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. <sup>18</sup>Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. <sup>19</sup>And David inquired of the LORD, “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?” And the LORD said to David, “Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand.” <sup>20</sup>And David came to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there. And he said, “The LORD has burst through my enemies before me like a bursting flood.” Therefore the name of that place is called Baal-perazim. <sup>21</sup>And the Philistines left their idols there, and David and his men carried them away.

<sup>22</sup>And the Philistines came up yet again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. <sup>23</sup>And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, “You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come against them opposite the balsam trees. <sup>24</sup>And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then rouse yourself, for then the LORD has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.” <sup>25</sup>And David did as the LORD commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer.

### New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 8:1–13

Food Offered to Idols

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup>If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought

to know. <sup>3</sup>But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

<sup>4</sup>Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” <sup>5</sup>For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—<sup>6</sup>yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

<sup>7</sup>However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

<sup>8</sup>Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. <sup>9</sup>But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup>For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? <sup>11</sup>And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. <sup>12</sup>Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

## Writing

Mary confesses that the foremost work God did for her was that He regarded her, which is indeed the greatest of His works, on which all the rest depend and from which they all derive. For where it comes to pass that God turns His face toward one to regard him, there is nothing but grace and salvation,

and all gifts and works must follow. Thus we read in Genesis 4:4, 5 that He had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering He had no regard. Here is the origin of the many prayers in the Psalter—that God would lift up His countenance upon us, that He would not hide His countenance from us, that He would make His face shine upon us, and the like. And that Mary herself regards this as the chief thing, she indicates by saying: “Behold, since He has regarded me, all generations will call me blessed.”

Note that she does not say men will speak all manner of good of her, praise her virtues, exalt her virginity or her humility, or sing of what she has done. But for this one thing alone, that God regarded her, men will call her blessed. That is to give all the glory to God as completely as it can be done. Therefore she points to God’s regard and says: “For, behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. That is, beginning with the time when God regarded my low estate, I shall be called blessed.” Not *she* is praised thereby, but God’s *grace* toward her. In fact, she is despised, and she despises herself in that she says her low estate was regarded by God. Therefore she also mentions her blessedness before enumerating the works that God did to her, and ascribes it all to the fact that God regarded her low estate. . . . For, of a truth, she did not lie when she herself acknowledged her unworthiness and nothingness, which God regarded, not because of any merit in her, but solely by reason of His grace.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

My soul now magnifies the Lord;  
My spirit leaps for joy in Him.  
He keeps me in His kind regard,  
And I am blest for time to come.

For He alone who shows such might  
Has done amazing things to me.  
His mercy flows; His name like light  
Remains in time perpetually.

—My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord  
(LSB 934:1–2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You chose the virgin Mary to be the mother of Your only Son. Grant that we, who are redeemed by His blood, may share with her in the glory of Your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F24)

## St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord

St. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is mentioned repeatedly in the Gospels and the Book of Acts, with nearly a dozen specific incidents in her life being recorded: her betrothal to Joseph; the annunciation by the angel Gabriel that she was to be the mother of the Messiah; her visitation to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptizer; the nativity of our Lord; the visits of the shepherds and the Wise Men; the presentation of the infant Jesus in the temple; the flight into Egypt; the Passover visit to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve; the wedding at Cana in Galilee; her presence at the crucifixion, when her Son commended her to the care of his disciple John; and her gathering with the apostles in

the Upper Room after the ascension, waiting for the promised Holy Spirit. Thus she is present at most of the important events in her Son's life. She is especially remembered and honored for her unconditional obedience to the will of God ("Let it be to me according to Your word" [Luke 1:38]); for her loyalty to her Son even when she did not understand Him ("Do whatever He tells you" [John 2:1–11]); and above all for the highest honor that heaven bestowed on her of being the mother of our Lord ("Blessed are you among women" [Luke 1:42]). According to tradition, Mary went with the apostle John to Ephesus, where she died.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 112–118 [233–239]

## 16 AUGUST

*Isaac*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> In the LORD I take refuge;  
how can you say | to my soul,\*  
"Flee like a bird to your | mountain,  
<sup>2</sup> for behold, the wicked | bend the bow;\*  
they have fitted their arrow  
to the string to shoot in the dark  
at the up- | right in heart;  
<sup>3</sup> if the foundations | are destroyed,\*  
what can the | righteous do?"  
<sup>4</sup> The LORD is in his holy temple;  
the LORD's throne is in | heaven;\*  
his eyes see, his eyelids test,  
the chil- | dren of man.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD tests the | righteous,\*  
 but his soul hates the wicked  
 and the one who loves | violence.  
<sup>6</sup>Let him rain coals on the | wicked;\*  
 fire and sulfur and a scorching wind  
 shall be the portion | of their cup.  
<sup>7</sup>For the LORD is righteous;  
 he loves | righteous deeds;\*  
 the upright shall be- | hold his face.  
 —Psalm 11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 84*

## Old Testament Reading: 2 Samuel 6:1–19

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup>David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. <sup>2</sup>And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. <sup>3</sup>And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart, <sup>4</sup>with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark.

Uzzah and the Ark

<sup>5</sup>And David and all the house of Israel were making merry before the LORD, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. <sup>6</sup>And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. <sup>7</sup>And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. <sup>8</sup>And David was angry because the LORD had burst forth against Uzzah. And

that place is called Perez-uzzah, to this day. <sup>9</sup>And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?” <sup>10</sup>So David was not willing to take the ark of the LORD into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. <sup>11</sup>And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

<sup>12</sup>And it was told King David, “The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.” So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. <sup>13</sup>And when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. <sup>14</sup>And David danced before the LORD with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. <sup>15</sup>So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn.

David and Michal

<sup>16</sup>As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, and she despised him in her heart. <sup>17</sup>And they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. <sup>18</sup>And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts <sup>19</sup>and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat,

and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house.

**New Testament Reading:  
1 Corinthians 9:1–23**

Paul Surrenders His Rights

<sup>1</sup>Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? <sup>2</sup>If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

<sup>3</sup>This is my defense to those who would examine me. <sup>4</sup>Do we not have the right to eat and drink? <sup>5</sup>Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? <sup>6</sup>Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? <sup>7</sup>Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?

<sup>8</sup>Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? <sup>9</sup>For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? <sup>10</sup>Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. <sup>11</sup>If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? <sup>12</sup>If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their

food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? <sup>14</sup>In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

<sup>15</sup>But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. <sup>16</sup>For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! <sup>17</sup>For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. <sup>18</sup>What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

<sup>19</sup>For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup>To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. <sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. <sup>23</sup>I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

**Writing**

It follows from this argument that there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake

of office and work, but not for the sake of status. They are all of the spiritual estate, all are truly priests, bishops, and popes. But they do not all have the same work to do. Just as all priests and monks do not have the same work. This is the teaching of St. Paul in Romans 12[:4–5] and I Corinthians 12[:12] and in I Peter 2[:9], as I have said above, namely, that we are all one body of Christ the Head, and all members one of another. Christ does not have two different bodies, one temporal, the other spiritual. There is but one Head and one body.

Therefore, just as those who are now called “spiritual,” that is, priests, bishops, or popes, are neither different from other Christians nor superior to them, except that they are charged with the administration of the word of God and the sacraments, which is their work and office, so it is with the temporal authorities. They bear the sword and rod in their hand to punish the wicked and protect the good. A cobbler, a smith, a peasant—each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops. Further, everyone must benefit and serve every other by means of his own work or office so that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, just as all the members of the body serve one another [I Cor. 12:14–26].

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

O keep me watchful, then, and humble;  
Permit me nevermore to stray.  
Uphold me when my feet would stumble,  
And keep me on the narrow way.  
Fill all my nature with Thy light,  
O Radiance strong and bright!  
—Thee Will I Love, My Strength,  
My Tower (LSB 694:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, heavenly Father, through the patriarch Isaac You preserved the seed of the Messiah and brought forth the new creation. Continue to preserve the Church as the Israel of God as she manifests the glory of Your holy name by continuing to worship Your Son, the child of Mary; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1076)

## Isaac

Isaac, the long promised and awaited son of Abraham and Sarah, was born when his father was one hundred years old and his mother was ninety-one years old. The announcement of his birth brought both joy and laughter to his aged parents (thus the name *Isaac*, which means “laughter”). As a young man, Isaac accompanied his father to Mount Moriah, where Abraham, in obedience to God’s command, prepared to sacrifice him as a burnt offering. But God intervened, sparing Isaac’s life by providing a ram as a substitute offering (Genesis 22:1–14), thus pointing to the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. Isaac was given in marriage to Rebekah (Genesis 24:67), and they had twin sons, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:19–26). In his old age, Isaac, blind and feeble, wanted to

give his blessing and chief inheritance to his favorite—and eldest—son, Esau. But through deception Rebekah helped Jacob receive his father’s blessing instead, resulting in years of family enmity. Isaac died at the age of 180 and was buried in the family burial cave of Machpelah by his sons, who by then had become reconciled (Genesis 35:28–29).

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 119–123 [240–244]

**17 AUGUST**

*Johann Gerhard, Theologian*

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup>The earth is the LORD’s  
and the full- | ness thereof,\*  
the world and those who | dwell therein,
- <sup>2</sup>for he has founded it up- | on the seas\*  
and established it upon the | rivers.
- <sup>3</sup>Who shall ascend the hill | of the LORD?\*
- And who shall stand in his | holy place?
- <sup>4</sup>He who has clean hands and a | pure heart,\*  
who does not lift up his soul to what is  
false and does not swear de- | ceitfully.
- <sup>5</sup>He will receive blessing | from the LORD\*  
and righteousness from the God  
of his sal- | vation.
- <sup>6</sup>Such is the generation  
of those who | seek him,\*  
who seek the face of the God of | Jacob.  
—Psalm 24:1–6

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 24*

**Old Testament Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1–17**

God’s Covenant with David

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, <sup>2</sup>the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” <sup>3</sup>And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, <sup>5</sup>“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? <sup>6</sup>I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. <sup>7</sup>In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’” <sup>8</sup>Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup>And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup>And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup>from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. <sup>12</sup>When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your

fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup>He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup>I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, <sup>15</sup>but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. <sup>16</sup>And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” <sup>17</sup>In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

### New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:24–10:22

[Paul Surrenders His Rights]

<sup>24</sup>Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. <sup>25</sup>Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. <sup>26</sup>So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. <sup>27</sup>But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Warning Against Idolatry

<sup>10:1</sup>For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup>and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup>and all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup>and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, with most of them God was

not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup>Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. <sup>7</sup>Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” <sup>8</sup>We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. <sup>9</sup>We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, <sup>10</sup>nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.

<sup>11</sup>Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. <sup>12</sup>Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. <sup>15</sup>I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. <sup>16</sup>The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup>Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. <sup>18</sup>Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? <sup>19</sup>What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? <sup>20</sup>No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. <sup>21</sup>You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of

demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. <sup>22</sup>Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

### Writing

O Lord, to You be honor and glory and blessing and thanksgiving (Revelation 7:12). You not only mercifully receive me when I repent, but also grant me the ability to keep from sinning and to live a life more free from error. What good would it be to be free from sickness if a worse relapse followed? What good would it be to be absolved from sin unless the grace is given to live a pious life? You, most faithful God, perform the duties of a faithful and skillful doctor in healing the mortal wounds of my soul. You heal them by the wounds of Your Son. There is danger that the healed wounds will be reopened, but Your Spirit prevents this with grace like a poultice.

After receiving the forgiveness of sins, so many people return to their former way of living. By repeating their sins, they offend God all the more grievously. We see so many who were freed from the yoke of sin only to return to the bondage that once held them. So many of those who have been led out of the spiritual Egypt look back to its fleshpots of carnal pleasures (Exodus 16:3). After recognizing Christ, they flee the defilement of the world but become entangled in it again as they return to their former evil ways (2 Peter 2:20). They were freed from the bonds of Satan through conversion. Trapped again by Satan's bonds, they hold fast to the deception of evil spirits. Their last state is surely worse than their first (Luke 11:26). It would have been better for them not to have

known the way of righteousness than, having known it, for them to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them (2 Peter 2:21). They are like dogs that return to their vomit or like pigs that wallow in muck after they are washed (2 Peter 2:22).

The same can happen to me if You do not keep me on the good path through Your powerful grace and the effective working of Your Holy Spirit. The same evil spirit that captured them attacks me. The same world that seduced them entices me. The same flesh that secured them lures me. Only Your grace protects me against these attacks and furnishes me with the power necessary for victory. Your strength supplies the power I need in my weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). You give my spirit the strength to restrain the passion of the flesh. Whatever is good in me comes from You, the font of all good things, because in me, by nature, there is nothing but sin. I have to acknowledge that all the good works I do—which are nevertheless impure because of the corruption and imperfection of my flesh—are gifts of Your grace. I will give You thanks forever because of Your immeasurable gift to me. Amen.

—Johann Gerhard

### Hymnody

Life-imparting heav'nly manna,  
Stricken rock with streaming side,  
Heav'n and earth with loud hosanna  
Worship You, the Lamb who died,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
Ris'n, ascended, glorified!  
Ris'n, ascended, glorified!

—Lord, Enthroned in Heavenly  
Splendor (*LSB* 534:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Most High God, we owe You great thanks that in the sacred mystery of the Supper You feed us with the body and blood of Your Son. May we approach this heavenly meal with true faith, firmly convinced that the body we eat is the one given into death for us and that the blood we drink is the blood shed for our sins; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1077)

## Johann Gerhard, Theologian

Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) was a great Lutheran theologian in the tradition of Martin Luther (1483–1546) and Martin Chemnitz (1522–86) and the most influential of the seventeenth-century dogmaticians. His monumental *Loci Theologici* (twenty-three large volumes) is still considered by many to be a definitive statement of Lutheran orthodoxy. Gerhard was born in Quedlinburg, Germany. At the age of fifteen he was stricken with a life-threatening illness. This experience, along with guidance from his pastor, Johann Arndt, marked a turning point in his life. He devoted the rest of his life to theology. He became a professor at the University of Jena and served many years as the superintendent of Heldburg. Gerhard was a man of deep evangelical piety and love for Jesus. He wrote numerous books on exegesis, theology, devotional literature, history, and polemics. His sermons continue to be widely published and read.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession V (III) 124–132 [245–253]

## 18 AUGUST

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD,  
for | he is good,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!
- <sup>2</sup> Let the redeemed of the LORD | say so,\*  
whom he has redeemed from | trouble
- <sup>3</sup> and gathered in | from the lands,\*  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and | from the south.
- <sup>4</sup> Some wandered in | desert wastes,\*  
finding no way to a city to | dwell in;
- <sup>5</sup> hungry and | thirsty,\*  
their soul fainted with- | in them.
- <sup>6</sup> Then they cried to the LORD  
in their | trouble,\*  
and he delivered them  
from | their distress.
- <sup>7</sup> He led them by a | straight way\*  
till they reached a city to | dwell in.
- <sup>8</sup> Let them thank the LORD  
for his | steadfast love,\*  
for his wondrous works  
to the chil- | dren of men!
- <sup>9</sup> For he satisfies the | longing soul,\*  
and the hungry soul he fills | with  
good things.  
—Psalm 107:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 106:1–5*

### Old Testament Reading: 2 Samuel 7:18–29

David's Prayer of Gratitude

<sup>18</sup>Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and said, "Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? <sup>19</sup>And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord GOD. You have spoken also of your servant's house for a

great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord GOD! <sup>20</sup>And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord GOD! <sup>21</sup>Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. <sup>22</sup>Therefore you are great, O LORD God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. <sup>23</sup>And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? <sup>24</sup>And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O LORD, became their God. <sup>25</sup>And now, O LORD God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. <sup>26</sup>And your name will be magnified forever, saying, ‘The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,’ and the house of your servant David will be established before you. <sup>27</sup>For you, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house.’ Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. <sup>28</sup>And now, O Lord GOD, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. <sup>29</sup>Now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you, O Lord GOD, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever.”

## New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:16

Do All to the Glory of God

<sup>23</sup>“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. <sup>24</sup>Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. <sup>25</sup>Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. <sup>26</sup>For “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.”

<sup>27</sup>If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience.

<sup>28</sup>But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience—<sup>29</sup>I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else’s conscience? <sup>30</sup>If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

<sup>31</sup>So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

<sup>32</sup>Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, <sup>33</sup>just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

<sup>11:1</sup>Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Head Coverings

<sup>2</sup>Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. <sup>3</sup>But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. <sup>4</sup>Every man who prays or prophesies

with his head covered dishonors his head, <sup>5</sup>but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven.

<sup>6</sup>For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. <sup>7</sup>For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. <sup>8</sup>For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. <sup>9</sup>Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. <sup>10</sup>That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. <sup>11</sup>Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; <sup>12</sup>for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. <sup>13</sup>Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? <sup>14</sup>Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, <sup>15</sup>but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. <sup>16</sup>If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

## Writing

1. We believe, teach, and confess that in the Holy Supper Christ's body and blood are truly and essentially present, and that they are truly distributed and received with the bread and wine.

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the words of Christ's testament are not to be understood in any other way than the way they read, according to the letter. So the bread does not signify Christ's absent body and the wine His absent blood. But, because

of the sacramental union, «the bread and wine» are truly Christ's body and blood.

3. Now, about the consecration, we believe, teach, and confess that no work of man or recitation of the minister produces this presence of Christ's body and blood in the Holy Supper. Instead, this presence is to be credited only and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. At the same time we also believe, teach, and confess unanimously that in the use of the Holy Supper the words of Christ's institution should in no way be left out. Instead, they should be publicly recited, as it is written in 1 Corinthians 10:16, "The cup of blessing that we bless" and so forth. This blessing occurs through the reciting of Christ's words. . . .

6. We believe, teach, and confess that Christ's body and blood are received with the bread and wine, not only spiritually through faith, but also orally. Yet not in a "Capernaïtic" way, but in a supernatural, heavenly way, because of the sacramental union. Christ's words clearly show this, when Christ gives direction to take, eat, and drink, as was also done by the apostles. For it is written in Mark 14:23, "And they all drank of it." St. Paul likewise says [in 1 Corinthians 10:16], "The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" That is to say: He who eats this bread eats Christ's body, which also the chief ancient teachers of the Church—Chrysostom, Cyprian, Leo I, Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine—unanimously testify.

—Epitome of the Formula of Concord  
VII 6–9, 15

## Hymnody

Lord, I will today  
 On Your love rely;  
 Let no evil thought  
 Cloud the clear blue sky.  
 Joyful and content  
 With life's simpler things,  
 Knowing all I need  
 From Your kindness springs.  
 —Greet the Rising Sun (*LSB* 871:3)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, by the patient suffering of Your only-begotten Son, You have beaten down the pride of the old enemy. Now help us, we humbly pray, to imitate all that our Lord has of His goodness borne for our sake, that after His example, we may bear with patience all that is adverse to us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1078)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 V (III) 133–136 [254–257]

## 19 AUGUST

*Bernard of Clairvaux, Hymnwriter  
 and Theologian*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Save, O LORD, for the godly | one is gone;\*  
 for the faithful have vanished from  
 among the chil- | dren of man.  
<sup>2</sup> Everyone utters lies to his | neighbor;\*  
 with flattering lips  
 and a double | heart they speak.

- <sup>3</sup> May the LORD cut off all | flattering lips,\*  
 the tongue that | makes great boasts,  
<sup>4</sup> those who say,  
 “With our tongue we | will prevail,\*  
 our lips are with us;  
 who is master | over us?”  
<sup>5</sup> “Because the poor are plundered,  
 because the needy groan,  
 I will now arise,” | says the LORD,\*  
 “I will place him in the safety  
 for | which he longs.”  
<sup>6</sup> The words of the LORD are | pure words,\*  
 like silver refined in a furnace on the  
 ground, purified | seven times.  
<sup>7</sup> You, O LORD, will | keep them;\*  
 you will guard us  
 from this generation for- | ever.  
<sup>8</sup> On every side the | wicked prowls,\*  
 as vileness is exalted among  
 the chil- | dren of man.  
 —Psalm 12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 22:14–21*

## Old Testament Reading:

### 2 Samuel 11:1–27

David and Bathsheba

<sup>1</sup>In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. <sup>3</sup>And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, “Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”

<sup>4</sup>So David sent messengers and took her,

and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. <sup>5</sup>And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."

<sup>6</sup>So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. <sup>7</sup>When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going. <sup>8</sup>Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. <sup>9</sup>But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. <sup>10</sup>When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" <sup>11</sup>Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." <sup>12</sup>Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. <sup>13</sup>And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

<sup>14</sup>In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. <sup>15</sup>In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die." <sup>16</sup>And as Joab was besieging the city,

he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. <sup>17</sup>And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died. <sup>18</sup>Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting. <sup>19</sup>And he instructed the messenger, "When you have finished telling all the news about the fighting to the king, <sup>20</sup>then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to you, 'Why did you go so near the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall?' <sup>21</sup>Who killed Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?' then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"

<sup>22</sup>So the messenger went and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell. <sup>23</sup>The messenger said to David, "The men gained an advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. <sup>24</sup>Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall. Some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." <sup>25</sup>David said to the messenger, "Thus shall you say to Joab, 'Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours now one and now another. Strengthen your attack against the city and overthrow it.' And encourage him."

<sup>26</sup>When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. <sup>27</sup>And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

## New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:17–34

### The Lord's Supper

<sup>17</sup>But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. <sup>18</sup>For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, <sup>19</sup>for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. <sup>20</sup>When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. <sup>21</sup>For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. <sup>22</sup>What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

<sup>23</sup>For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup>and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup>In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup>For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

<sup>27</sup>Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup>Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup>For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup>That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some

have died. <sup>31</sup>But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup>But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

<sup>33</sup>So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—<sup>34</sup>if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

### Writing

There is no glory in having a gift without knowing it. But to know only that you have it, without knowing that it is not of yourself that you have it, means self-glorifying, but no true glory in God. And so the apostle says to men in such cases, "What do you have that you did not receive? Now, if you received it, why do you glory as if you had not received it?" (1 Cor. 4:7). He asks, "Why do you glory?" but goes on, "as if you had not received it," showing that the guilt is not in glorying over a possession but in glorying as though it had not been received. And rightly such glorying is called vain-glory, since it has not the solid foundation of truth. The apostle shows how to discern the true glory from the false when he says, "He that glories, let him glory in the Lord," that is, in the truth, since our Lord is truth (1 Cor. 1:31; John 14:6).

We must hate and shun that presumption which would lead us to glory in goods not our own, knowing that they are not of ourselves but of God, and yet not fearing to rob God of the honor due unto Him. . . . Ignorance is brutal, arrogance is devilish. Pride only, the chief of all iniquities, can make us treat gifts as if they were rightful

attributes of our nature, and, while receiving benefits, rob our Benefactor of His due glory. . . .

The Father of Christ, who makes all things new, is well pleased with the freshness of those flowers and fruits and the beauty of the field that breathes forth such heavenly fragrance. And He says in benediction, “See, the smell of My Son is as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed” (Gen. 27:27). Blessed to overflowing, indeed, since of His fullness have all we received (John 1:16).

—Bernard of Clairvaux

### Hymnody

Be Thou my consolation,  
My shield, when I must die;  
Remind me of Thy passion  
When my last hour draws nigh.  
Mine eyes shall then behold Thee,  
Upon Thy cross shall dwell,  
My heart by faith enfold Thee.  
Who dieth thus dies well.

—O Sacred Head, Now Wounded  
(LSB 450:7)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, enkindled with the fire of Your love, Your servant Bernard of Clairvaux became a burning and shining light in Your Church. By Your mercy, grant that we also may be aflame with the spirit of love and discipline and may ever walk in Your presence as children of light; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1079)

### Bernard of Clairvaux, Hymnwriter and Theologian

A leader in Christian Europe in the first half of the twelfth century AD, Bernard is honored in his native France and around the world. Born into a noble family in Burgundy in 1090, Bernard left the affluence of his heritage and entered the monastery of Citeaux at the age of twenty-two. After two years, he was sent to start a new monastic house at Clairvaux. His work there was blessed in many ways. The monastery at Clairvaux grew in mission and service, eventually establishing some sixty-eight daughter houses. Bernard is remembered not only for his charity and political abilities but especially for his preaching and hymn composition. The hymn texts “O Jesus, King Most Wonderful” and “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” are part of the heritage of the faith left by St. Bernard.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 137–139 [258–260]

## 20 AUGUST

*Samuel*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;\*  
according to your abundant mercy blot  
out my trans- | gressions.

<sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my in- | iquity,\*  
and cleanse me | from my sin!

- <sup>3</sup> For I know my trans- | gressions,\*  
and my sin is ever be- | fore me.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in in- | iquity,\*  
and in sin did my mother  
con- | ceive me.
- <sup>6</sup> Behold, you delight in truth  
in the inward | being,\*  
and you teach me wisdom  
in the | secret heart.
- <sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop,  
and I | shall be clean;\*  
wash me, and I shall be  
whit- | er than snow.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and | gladness,\*  
let the bones that you  
have bro- | ken rejoice.  
—Psalm 51:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 51*

## Old Testament Reading: 2 Samuel 12:1–25

Nathan Rebukes David

<sup>1</sup>And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, “There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup>The rich man had very many flocks and herds, <sup>3</sup>but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. <sup>4</sup>Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he

took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.” <sup>5</sup>Then David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, <sup>6</sup>and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.”

<sup>7</sup>Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. <sup>8</sup>And I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. <sup>9</sup>Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. <sup>10</sup>Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’” <sup>11</sup>Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. <sup>12</sup>For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.’” <sup>13</sup>David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die.” <sup>15</sup>Then Nathan went to his house.

## David's Child Dies

And the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick. <sup>16</sup>David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. <sup>17</sup>And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them. <sup>18</sup>On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us. How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm." <sup>19</sup>But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David understood that the child was dead. And David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" They said, "He is dead." <sup>20</sup>Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. He then went to his own house. And when he asked, they set food before him, and he ate. <sup>21</sup>Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food." <sup>22</sup>He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' <sup>23</sup>But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."

*Additional Reading: 2 Samuel 13:1–19:43*

## New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1–13

### Spiritual Gifts

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup>You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. <sup>3</sup>Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup>For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

### One Body with Many Members

<sup>12</sup>For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

## Writing

7. We believe, teach, and confess that not only the true believers in Christ and the worthy, but also the unworthy and unbelievers receive Christ's true body and blood. However, they do not receive them for life and consolation, but for judgment and condemnation, if they are not converted and do not repent (1 Corinthians 11:27–29).

Although they thrust Christ as a Savior away from themselves, yet they must receive Him, even against their will, as a strict Judge. They must admit that He is just as present to exercise and render judgment on unrepentant guests as He is present to work life and consolation in the hearts of the true believers and worthy guests.

8. We believe, teach, and confess also that there is only one kind of unworthy guests: those who do not believe. About these guests it is written in John 3:18, "Whoever does not believe is condemned already." And this judgment becomes greater and more grievous, being aggravated by the unworthy use of the Holy Supper (1 Corinthians 11:29).

9. We believe, teach, and confess that no true believer—as long as he has living faith, however weak he may be—receives the Holy Supper to his judgment. For the Supper was instituted especially for Christians weak in faith, yet repentant. It was instituted for their consolation and to strengthen their weak faith [Matthew 9:12; 11:5, 28].

10. We believe, teach, and confess that all the worthiness of guests of this heavenly feast is and is founded on Christ's most holy obedience and perfect merit alone. We receive these for ourselves by true faith, and by the Sacrament we are assured of them.

Our worthiness is not at all in our virtues or inward and outward preparations.

—Epitome of the Formula of  
Concord VII 16–20

## Hymnody

Once in the blest baptismal waters  
I put on Christ and made Him mine;  
Now numbered with God's sons and  
daughters,

I share His peace and love divine.

O God, for Jesus' sake I pray

Your peace may bless my dying day.

—Once in the Blest Baptismal Waters  
(LSB 598:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, in Your mercy You gave Samuel courage to call Israel to repentance and to renew their dedication to the Lord. Call us to repentance as Nathan called David to repentance, so by the blood of Jesus, the Son of David, we may receive the forgiveness of all our sins; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1080)

## Samuel

Samuel, last of the Old Testament judges and first of the prophets (after Moses), lived during the eleventh century BC.

The child of Elkanah, an Ephraimite, and his wife Hannah, Samuel was from early on consecrated by his parents for sacred service and trained in the house of the Lord at Shiloh by Eli the priest. Samuel's authority as a prophet was established by God (1 Samuel 3:20). He anointed Saul to be Israel's first king (1 Samuel 10:1). Later, as a result of Saul's disobedience to God, Samuel repudiated Saul's leadership and then

anointed David to be king in place of Saul (1 Samuel 16:13). Samuel's loyalty to God, his spiritual insight, and his ability to inspire others made him one of Israel's great leaders.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 140–143 [261–264]

## 21 AUGUST

### Psalmody

<sup>13</sup> For you formed my | inward parts,\*  
you knitted me together i  
n my | mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully  
and wonder- | fully made.\*  
Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it | very well.

<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hid- | den from you,\*  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths | of  
the earth.

<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed substance;  
in your book were written,  
every | one of them,\*  
the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there were | none of them.

<sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and | know my heart!\*

Try me and | know my thoughts!

<sup>24</sup> And see if there be any grievous | way  
in me,\*  
and lead me in the way ever- | lasting!  
—Psalm 139:13–16, 23–24

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 139*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 1:1–4, 15–35

David in His Old Age

<sup>1</sup>Now King David was old and advanced in years. And although they covered him with clothes, he could not get warm.

<sup>2</sup>Therefore his servants said to him, “Let a young woman be sought for my lord the king, and let her wait on the king and be in his service. Let her lie in your arms, that my lord the king may be warm.” <sup>3</sup>So they sought for a beautiful young woman throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

<sup>4</sup>The young woman was very beautiful, and she was of service to the king and attended to him, but the king knew her not. . . .

<sup>15</sup>So Bathsheba went to the king in his chamber (now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was attending to the king). <sup>16</sup>Bathsheba bowed and paid homage to the king, and the king said, “What do you desire?” <sup>17</sup>She said to him, “My lord, you swore to your servant by the LORD your God, saying, ‘Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.’ <sup>18</sup>And now, behold, Adonijah is king, although you, my lord the king, do not know it. <sup>19</sup>He has sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of the army, but Solomon your servant he has not invited. <sup>20</sup>And now, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. <sup>21</sup>Otherwise it will come to pass, when my lord the king sleeps with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted offenders.”

<sup>22</sup>While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet came in. <sup>23</sup>And they told the king, “Here is Nathan the prophet.” And when he came in before the king, he bowed before the king, with his face to the ground. <sup>24</sup>And Nathan said, “My lord the king, have you said, ‘Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne?’ <sup>25</sup>For he has gone down this day and has sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king’s sons, the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest. And behold, they are eating and drinking before him, and saying, ‘Long live King Adonijah!’ <sup>26</sup>But me, your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon he has not invited. <sup>27</sup>Has this thing been brought about by my lord the king and you have not told your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?”

Solomon Anointed King

<sup>28</sup>Then King David answered, “Call Bathsheba to me.” So she came into the king’s presence and stood before the king. <sup>29</sup>And the king swore, saying, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity, <sup>30</sup>as I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, saying, ‘Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,’ even so will I do this day.” <sup>31</sup>Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground and paid homage to the king and said, “May my lord King David live forever!”

<sup>32</sup>King David said, “Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.” So they came before the king. <sup>33</sup>And the king said to them, “Take with you the servants of your lord and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and

bring him down to Gihon. <sup>34</sup>And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel. Then blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ <sup>35</sup>You shall then come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, for he shall be king in my place. And I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.”

### New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:14–31

[One Body with Many Members]

<sup>14</sup>For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? <sup>18</sup>But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup>If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

<sup>21</sup>The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” <sup>22</sup>On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup>and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup>which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, <sup>25</sup>that there may be no division in the body, but that the members

may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

<sup>27</sup>Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. <sup>28</sup>And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup>Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup>Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup>But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

## Writing

What we call the mass is a promise of the forgiveness of sins made to us by God, and such a promise as has been confirmed by the death of the Son of God. For the only difference between a promise and a testament is that the testament involves the death of the one who makes it. A testator is a promiser who is about to die, while a promiser (if I may put it thus) is a testator who is not about to die. This testament of Christ is foreshadowed in all the promises of God from the beginning of the world; indeed, whatever value those ancient promises possessed was altogether derived from this new promise that was to come in Christ. Hence the words “compact,” “covenant,” and “testament of the Lord” occur so frequently in the Scriptures. These words signified that God would one day die. “For where there is a testament, the death of the testator must of necessity occur” (Heb. 9[16]). Now God made a testament; therefore, it was necessary that he should die. But God could

not die unless he became man. Thus the incarnation and the death of Christ are both comprehended most concisely in this one word, “testament.”

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Holy Spirit, ever working  
Through the Church’s ministry;  
Quick’ning, strength’ning, and absolving,  
Setting captive sinners free;  
Holy Spirit, ever binding  
Age to age and soul to soul  
In communion never ending,  
You we worship and extol.

—Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling  
(*LSB* 650:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God Almighty, even as You bless Your servants with various and unique gifts of the Holy Spirit, continue to grant us the grace to use them always to Your honor and glory; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (192)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 144–147 [265–268]

## 22 AUGUST

## Psalmody

<sup>6</sup>The heavens proclaim his | righteousness,\*  
and all the peoples see his | glory.

<sup>7</sup>All worshipers of images are put to shame,  
who make their boast in worthless | idols;\*  
worship him, | all you gods!

<sup>8</sup> Zion hears and is glad,  
and the daughters of Ju- | dah rejoice,\*  
because of your judgments, | O LORD.

<sup>9</sup> For you, O LORD, are most high  
over | all the earth;\*  
you are exalted far a- | bove all gods.

<sup>10</sup> O you who love the LORD, hate | evil!\*  
He preserves the lives of his saints;  
he delivers them from the hand  
of the | wicked.

<sup>11</sup> Light is sown for the | righteous,\*  
and joy for the up- | right in heart.

<sup>12</sup> Rejoice in the LORD, O you | righteous,\*  
and give thanks to his | holy name!  
—Psalm 97:6–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 97*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 2:1–27

David's Instructions to Solomon

<sup>1</sup>When David's time to die drew near,  
he commanded Solomon his son, saying,  
<sup>2</sup>"I am about to go the way of all the earth.  
Be strong, and show yourself a man, <sup>3</sup>and  
keep the charge of the LORD your God,  
walking in his ways and keeping his statutes,  
his commandments, his rules, and his  
testimonies, as it is written in the Law of  
Moses, that you may prosper in all that  
you do and wherever you turn, <sup>4</sup>that the  
LORD may establish his word that he spoke  
concerning me, saying, 'If your sons pay  
close attention to their way, to walk before  
me in faithfulness with all their heart and  
with all their soul, you shall not lack a man  
on the throne of Israel.'

<sup>5</sup>"Moreover, you also know what Joab  
the son of Zeruiah did to me, how he dealt  
with the two commanders of the armies of  
Israel, Abner the son of Ner, and Amasa the  
son of Jether, whom he killed, avenging in

time of peace for blood that had been shed  
in war, and putting the blood of war on the  
belt around his waist and on the sandals on  
his feet. <sup>6</sup>Act therefore according to your  
wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down  
to Sheol in peace. <sup>7</sup>But deal loyally with the  
sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them  
be among those who eat at your table, for  
with such loyalty they met me when I fled  
from Absalom your brother. <sup>8</sup>And there is  
also with you Shimei the son of Gera, the  
Benjaminite from Bahurim, who cursed me  
with a grievous curse on the day when I went  
to Mahanaim. But when he came down to  
meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the  
LORD, saying, 'I will not put you to death  
with the sword.' <sup>9</sup>Now therefore do not hold  
him guiltless, for you are a wise man. You  
will know what you ought to do to him, and  
you shall bring his gray head down with  
blood to Sheol."

The Death of David

<sup>10</sup>Then David slept with his fathers and  
was buried in the city of David. <sup>11</sup>And the  
time that David reigned over Israel was forty  
years. He reigned seven years in Hebron and  
thirty-three years in Jerusalem. <sup>12</sup>So Solomon  
sat on the throne of David his father, and his  
kingdom was firmly established.

Solomon's Reign Established

<sup>13</sup>Then Adonijah the son of Haggith  
came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon.  
And she said, "Do you come peacefully?"  
He said, "Peacefully." <sup>14</sup>Then he said, "I have  
something to say to you." She said, "Speak."  
<sup>15</sup>He said, "You know that the kingdom was  
mine, and that all Israel fully expected me  
to reign. However, the kingdom has turned  
about and become my brother's, for it was his  
from the LORD. <sup>16</sup>And now I have one request

to make of you; do not refuse me.” She said to him, “Speak.” <sup>17</sup>And he said, “Please ask King Solomon—he will not refuse you—to give me Abishag the Shunammite as my wife.”

<sup>18</sup>Bathsheba said, “Very well; I will speak for you to the king.”

<sup>19</sup>So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the king rose to meet her and bowed down to her. Then he sat on his throne and had a seat brought for the king’s mother, and she sat on his right. <sup>20</sup>Then she said, “I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me.” And the king said to her, “Make your request, my mother, for I will not refuse you.”

<sup>21</sup>She said, “Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as his wife.”

<sup>22</sup>King Solomon answered his mother, “And why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is my older brother, and on his side are Abiathar the priest and Joab the son of Zeruah.” <sup>23</sup>Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, “God do so to me and more also if this word does not cost Adonijah his life! <sup>24</sup>Now therefore as the LORD lives, who has established me and placed me on the throne of David my father, and who has made me a house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today.” <sup>25</sup>So King Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he struck him down, and he died.

<sup>26</sup>And to Abiathar the priest the king said, “Go to Anathoth, to your estate, for you deserve death. But I will not at this time put you to death, because you carried the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because you shared in all my father’s affliction.” <sup>27</sup>So Solomon expelled Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, thus fulfilling

the word of the Lord that he had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

## **New Testament Reading:** **1 Corinthians 13:1–13**

The Way of Love

<sup>1</sup>If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup>or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

<sup>8</sup>Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup>For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup>but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. <sup>12</sup>For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

<sup>13</sup>So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

*Additional Reading: 1 Corinthians 14:1–16:24*

## Writing

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:13, “The greatest of these is love.” . . . Paul, in this passage, properly speaks about love toward one’s neighbor and indicates that love is the greatest, because it has the most fruit. Faith and hope have to do only with God. But love has infinite offices outwardly toward humanity. Indeed, let us grant to the adversaries that love toward God and our neighbor is the greatest virtue, because the chief commandment is this: “You shall love the Lord your God” (Matthew 22:37). But how will they conclude [their argument] from this that love justifies? They say, “The greatest virtue justifies.” By no means! For just as the greatest, or first, Law does not justify, so also the Law’s greatest virtue does not justify. But the virtue that justifies receives Christ, which brings to us Christ’s merits, by which we receive grace and peace from God. This virtue is faith. As it has often been said, faith is not just knowledge. But it is willing to receive or take hold of those things that are offered in the promise about Christ. Furthermore, this obedience toward God (i.e., to want to receive the offered promise) is no less a divine service (*latreia*) than is love. God wants us to believe Him and to receive from Him blessings. He declares this to be true divine service.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 104–107 [225–228]

We believe, teach, and confess that the contrition that comes before justification, and the good works that follow it, do not belong to the article of justification before God. Yet one is not to imagine a kind of faith that can exist and abide with, and alongside of, a wicked intention to sin and to act against the conscience. But after man

has been justified through faith, then a true living faith works by love (Galatians 5:6). Good works always follow justifying faith and are surely found with it—if it is true and living faith [James 2:26]. Faith is never alone, but always has love and hope with it [1 Corinthians 13:13].

—Epitome of the Formula of Concord  
III 11

## Hymnody

Love in Christ abides forever,  
Fainting not when ills attend;  
Love, forgiving and forgiven,  
Shall endure until life’s end.

—Love in Christ Is Strong and Living  
(*LSB* 706:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, give us an increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain what You have promised, make us love what You have commanded; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H73)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 148–152 [269–273]

## 23 AUGUST

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my | whole heart,\*  
in the company of the upright,  
in the congre- | gation.

<sup>2</sup> Great are the works | of the LORD,\*  
studied by all who de- | light in them.

<sup>3</sup> Full of splendor and majesty | is his work,\*  
and his righteousness endures for- | ever.

<sup>9</sup> He sent redemption to his people;  
he has commanded his covenant for- | ever.\*  
Holy and awesome | is his name!

<sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning  
of wisdom; all those who practice it  
have a good under- | standing.\*  
His praise endures for- | ever!  
—Psalm 111:1–3, 9–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 49*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 3:1–15

Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom

<sup>1</sup> Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt. He took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her into the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD and the wall around Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> The people were sacrificing at the high places, however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father, only he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places. <sup>4</sup> And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. <sup>5</sup> At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said,

“Ask what I shall give you.” <sup>6</sup> And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. <sup>7</sup> And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup> And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. <sup>9</sup> Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

<sup>10</sup> It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup> And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup> behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. <sup>13</sup> I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. <sup>14</sup> And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

<sup>15</sup> And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings and

peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

*Additional Reading: 1 Kings 3:16–4:34*

**New Testament Reading:  
2 Corinthians 1:1–22**

Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:

<sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God of All Comfort

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup>who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup>For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. <sup>6</sup>If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. <sup>7</sup>Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

<sup>8</sup>For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. <sup>9</sup>Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup>He delivered us from such

a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. <sup>11</sup>You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

Paul’s Change of Plans

<sup>12</sup>For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. <sup>13</sup>For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and acknowledge and I hope you will fully acknowledge—<sup>14</sup>just as you did partially acknowledge us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

<sup>15</sup>Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace. <sup>16</sup>I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. <sup>17</sup>Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time? <sup>18</sup>As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. <sup>19</sup>For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. <sup>20</sup>For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. <sup>21</sup>And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, <sup>22</sup>and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

## Writing

Blessed is He who, because He esteemed us with His overflowing love, sent us His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased, so that we, reconciled through the Son, might have peace with Him, and so that the Son might be both our Mediator and the Guarantee of this reconciliation. It's not that we, my brothers, feel anxious under such a devoted Mediator. Neither do we doubt such a trustworthy Surety. But what sort of mediator, you will ask, is born in a stable, is put in a manger, is wrapped in swaddling clothes like the others, cries like others, and finally is laid to rest just like other babies? A thoroughly great Mediator, who brings about not a perfunctory, but an effectual peace through all of these things!

He is indeed a baby, but He is also the Word, who is not silent even in His infancy, but says, as our Emmanuel, "God with us," "Comfort, comfort my people" (Isaiah 40:1). The stable shouts this message, and so do the manger, the tears and the swaddling clothes. The stable cries out that we can trust the One who cares for us like the man who fell among robbers on the road to Jericho was cared for (Luke 10:30). The manger proclaims that the same man who was compared to steeds (Psalm 68:18) was fed with fodder as a baby. The tears and the swaddling clothes declare that we are washed and cleansed by the cruel wounds of this same person. For Christ did not undergo any of these things for Himself; He endured them all for us. . . .

Let us therefore revere Him in the manger, on the cross, at the sepulchre. We devoutly receive the One who tenderly shed blood for us, grew pale for us, and was buried for us. We lovingly adore Him together with

the Magi, and we embrace our infant Savior in the temple together with holy Simeon, as our Mercy. For Christ is indeed the one about whom we read: "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 103:17).

—Bernard of Clairvaux

## Hymnody

Should some lust or sharp temptation  
Fascinate my sinful mind,  
Draw me to Your cross and passion,  
And new courage I shall find.  
Or should Satan press me hard,  
Let me then be on my guard,  
Saying, "Christ for me was wounded,"  
That the tempter flee confounded.

—Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing  
(*LSB* 421:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, Father of all mercy and God of all comfort, You always go before and follow after us. Grant that we may rejoice in Your gracious presence and continually be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C63)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 153–159 [274–280]

24 AUGUST

*St Bartholomew, Apostle*

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom | shall I fear?\*

The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I | be afraid?

<sup>7</sup>Hear, O LORD, when I | cry aloud; \*  
be gracious to me and | answer me!

<sup>8</sup>You have said, | “Seek my face.” \*  
My heart says to you, “Your face,  
LORD, | do I seek.”

<sup>9</sup>Hide not your face from me.  
Turn not your servant away in | anger; \*  
O you who have been my help.  
Cast me not off; forsake me not,  
O God of my sal- | vation!

<sup>10</sup>For my father and my mother  
have for- | saken me, \*  
but the LORD will | take me in.

<sup>11</sup>Teach me your way, | O LORD, \*  
and lead me on a level path because  
of my | enemies.

—Psalm 27:1, 7–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 27*

**Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 5:1–18**

Preparations for Building the Temple

<sup>1</sup>Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram always loved David. <sup>2</sup>And Solomon sent word to Hiram, <sup>3</sup>“You know that David my father could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. <sup>4</sup>But now the LORD

my God has given me rest on every side.

There is neither adversary nor misfortune.

<sup>5</sup>And so I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD said to David my father, ‘Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, shall build the house for my name.’ <sup>6</sup>Now therefore command that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me. And my servants will join your servants, and I will pay you for your servants such wages as you set, for you know that there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians.”

<sup>7</sup>As soon as Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly and said, “Blessed be the LORD this day, who has given to David a wise son to be over this great people.” <sup>8</sup>And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, “I have heard the message that you have sent to me. I am ready to do all you desire in the matter of cedar and cypress timber. <sup>9</sup>My servants shall bring it down to the sea from Lebanon, and I will make it into rafts to go by sea to the place you direct. And I will have them broken up there, and you shall receive it. And you shall meet my wishes by providing food for my household.”

<sup>10</sup>So Hiram supplied Solomon with all the timber of cedar and cypress that he desired, <sup>11</sup>while Solomon gave Hiram 20,000 cors of wheat as food for his household, and 20,000 cors of beaten oil. Solomon gave this to Hiram year by year. <sup>12</sup>And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him. And there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty.

<sup>13</sup>King Solomon drafted forced labor out of all Israel, and the draft numbered 30,000 men. <sup>14</sup>And he sent them to Lebanon, 10,000 a month in shifts. They would be a month in Lebanon and two months at

home. Adoniram was in charge of the draft. <sup>15</sup>Solomon also had 70,000 burden-bearers and 80,000 stonecutters in the hill country, <sup>16</sup>besides Solomon's 3,300 chief officers who were over the work, who had charge of the people who carried on the work. <sup>17</sup>At the king's command they quarried out great, costly stones in order to lay the foundation of the house with dressed stones. <sup>18</sup>So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the men of Gebal did the cutting and prepared the timber and the stone to build the house.

*Additional Reading: 1 Kings 6:1–7:50*

## **New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:23–2:17**

[Paul's Change of Plans]

<sup>23</sup>But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. <sup>24</sup>Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

<sup>21</sup>For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. <sup>2</sup>For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? <sup>3</sup>And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. <sup>4</sup>For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

Forgive the Sinner

<sup>5</sup>Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. <sup>6</sup>For such a one, this punishment

by the majority is enough, <sup>7</sup>so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. <sup>8</sup>So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. <sup>9</sup>For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. <sup>10</sup>Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, <sup>11</sup>so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

Triumph in Christ

<sup>12</sup>When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, <sup>13</sup>my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

<sup>14</sup>But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. <sup>15</sup>For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, <sup>16</sup>to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? <sup>17</sup>For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

## **Writing**

[C]onsider by [St. Paul's] example how important a matter is the care of souls . . . The manifold character of his ministry? Consider his loving-kindness and, on the other hand, his strictness and the combination and blending of the two in such

way that his gentleness should not weaken nor his severity exasperate. . . . On behalf of some he gives thanks; others he upbraids. Some he names his joy and crown; others he charges with folly. Some who hold a straight course he accompanies, sharing in their zeal; others who are going wrong he checks. At one time he excommunicates; at another he confirms his love. At one time he grieves; at another rejoices. At one time he feeds with milk; at another he handles mysteries. At one time he condescends; at another he raises to his own level. At one time he threatens a rod; at another he offers the spirit of meekness. At one time he is haughty toward the lofty; at another lowly toward the lowly. Now he is least of the apostles, now he offers a proof of Christ speaking in him; now he longs for departure and is being poured forth as a libation, now he thinks it more necessary for their sakes to abide in the flesh. For he seeks not his own interests, but those of his children whom he has begotten in Christ by the Gospel. This is the aim of all his spiritual authority, in everything to neglect his own in comparison with the advantage of others.

—Gregory Nazianzen

### Hymnody

All praise for him whose candor  
 Through all his doubt You saw  
 When Philip at the fig tree  
 Disclosed You in the law.  
 Discern, beneath our surface,  
 O Lord, what we can be,  
 That by Your truth made guileless,  
 Your glory we may see.

—By All Your Saints in Warfare  
 (LSB 518:23)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, Your Son, Jesus Christ, chose Bartholomew to be an apostle to preach the blessed Gospel. Grant that Your Church may love what he believed and preach what he taught; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
 (F25)

### St Bartholomew, Apostle

St. Bartholomew (or Nathanael, as he is called in St. John's Gospel) was one of the first of Jesus' twelve disciples. His home was in the town of Cana, in Galilee (John 21:2), where Jesus' performed His first miracle. He was invited to become one of the Twelve by Philip, who told him that they had found the Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. (John 1:45). His initial hesitation to believe, because of Jesus' Nazareth background, was quickly replaced by a clear, unequivocal declaration of faith, "You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (John 1:49). He was present with the other disciples (John 21:1–13) when they were privileged to see and converse and eat with their risen Lord and Savior. According to some Early Church Fathers, Bartholomew brought the Gospel to Armenia, where he was martyred by being flayed alive.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 V (III) 160–166 [281–287]

## 25 AUGUST

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Blessèd is the one whose transgression  
is for- | given,\*  
whose sin is | covered.

<sup>2</sup> Blessèd is the man against whom the Lord  
counts no in- | iquity,\*  
and in whose spirit there is | no deceit.

<sup>3</sup> For when I kept silent,  
my bones wast- | ed away\*  
through my groaning | all day long.

<sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand  
was heavy up- | on me,\*  
my strength was dried up as by  
the heat of | summer.

<sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not cover my in- | iquity;\*  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions  
to the LORD," and you forgave the  
iniquity | of my sin.

<sup>6</sup> Therefore let everyone who is godly offer  
prayer to you at a time when you | may  
be found,\*  
surely in the rush of great waters,  
they shall not | reach him.

<sup>7</sup> You are a hiding place for me;  
you preserve me from | trouble;\*  
you surround me with shouts  
of de- | liverance.

—Psalm 32:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 32*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 7:51–8:21

[The Temple Furnishings]

<sup>51</sup> Thus all the work that King Solomon  
did on the house of the LORD was finished.  
And Solomon brought in the things that  
David his father had dedicated, the silver, the

gold, and the vessels, and stored them in the  
treasuries of the house of the LORD.

The Ark Brought into the Temple

<sup>8:1</sup> Then Solomon assembled the elders  
of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the  
leaders of the fathers' houses of the people  
of Israel, before King Solomon in Jerusalem,  
to bring up the ark of the covenant of the  
LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.  
<sup>2</sup> And all the men of Israel assembled to King  
Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim,  
which is the seventh month. <sup>3</sup> And all the  
elders of Israel came, and the priests took  
up the ark. <sup>4</sup> And they brought up the ark of  
the LORD, the tent of meeting, and all the  
holy vessels that were in the tent; the priests  
and the Levites brought them up. <sup>5</sup> And King  
Solomon and all the congregation of Israel,  
who had assembled before him, were with  
him before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep  
and oxen that they could not be counted or  
numbered. <sup>6</sup> Then the priests brought the  
ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place  
in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the  
Most Holy Place, underneath the wings of  
the cherubim. <sup>7</sup> For the cherubim spread out  
their wings over the place of the ark, so that  
the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its  
poles. <sup>8</sup> And the poles were so long that the  
ends of the poles were seen from the Holy  
Place before the inner sanctuary; but they  
could not be seen from outside. And they are  
there to this day. <sup>9</sup> There was nothing in the  
ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses  
put there at Horeb, where the LORD made  
a covenant with the people of Israel, when  
they came out of the land of Egypt. <sup>10</sup> And  
when the priests came out of the Holy Place,  
a cloud filled the house of the LORD, <sup>11</sup> so  
that the priests could not stand to minister

because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

Solomon Blesses the LORD

<sup>12</sup>Then Solomon said, “The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.” <sup>14</sup>Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. <sup>15</sup>And he said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, <sup>16</sup>‘Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there. But I chose David to be over my people Israel.’ <sup>17</sup>Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. <sup>18</sup>But the LORD said to David my father, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. <sup>19</sup>Nevertheless, you shall not build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.’ <sup>20</sup>Now the LORD has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. <sup>21</sup>And there I have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

## New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 3:1–18

Ministers of the New Covenant

<sup>1</sup>Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some

do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? <sup>2</sup>You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. <sup>3</sup>And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

<sup>4</sup>Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. <sup>5</sup>Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, <sup>6</sup>who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

<sup>7</sup>Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, <sup>8</sup>will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? <sup>9</sup>For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. <sup>10</sup>Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. <sup>11</sup>For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

<sup>12</sup>Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, <sup>13</sup>not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. <sup>14</sup>But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. <sup>15</sup>Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. <sup>16</sup>But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

<sup>17</sup>Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup>And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

## Writing

These two doctrines, we believe and confess, should always be diligently taught in God's Church forever, even to the end of the world. They must be taught with the proper distinction of which we have heard: (a) through the preaching of the Law and its threats in the ministry of the New Testament the hearts of impenitent people may be terrified, and (b) they may be brought to a knowledge of their sins and to repentance. This must not be done in such a way that they lose heart and despair in this process. "So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24); so the Law points and leads us not from Christ, but to Christ, who "is the end of the law" (Romans 10:4). People must be comforted and strengthened again by the preaching of the Holy Gospel about Christ, our Lord. In other words, to those who believe the Gospel, God forgives all their sins through Christ, adopts them as children for His sake, and out of pure grace—without any merit on their part—justifies and saves them. However, He does not do this in such a way that they may abuse God's grace and may sin hoping for grace [Romans 6:1]. Paul thoroughly and forcefully shows this in the distinction between the Law and the Gospel (2 Corinthians 3:6–9).

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord V 24–26

## Hymnody

Finish then Thy new creation,  
Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see Thy great salvation  
Perfectly restored in Thee,  
Changed from glory into glory,  
Till in heav'n we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,  
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

—Love Divine, All Loves Excelling  
(*LSB* 700:4)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You resist the proud and give grace to the humble. Grant us true humility after the likeness of Your only Son that we may never be arrogant and prideful and thus provoke Your wrath but in all lowliness be made partakers of the gifts of Your grace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (216)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 167–169 [288–290]

## 26 AUGUST

## Psalmody

<sup>7</sup>How precious is your steadfast love, | O God!\*

The children of mankind take refuge  
in the shadow | of your wings.

<sup>8</sup>They feast on the abundance | of  
your house,\*

and you give them drink from the river  
of | your delights.

<sup>9</sup>For with you is the foun- | tain of life;\*  
in your light do | we see light.

<sup>10</sup> Oh, continue your steadfast love  
to those who | know you,\*  
and your righteousness  
to the up- | right of heart!

<sup>11</sup> Let not the foot of arrogance  
come up- | on me,\*  
nor the hand of the wicked  
drive | me away.

<sup>12</sup> There the evildoers lie | fallen;\*  
they are thrust down, unable | to rise.  
—Psalm 36:7–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 36*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**1 Kings 8:22–30, 46–63**

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

<sup>22</sup>Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, <sup>23</sup>and said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart, <sup>24</sup>who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day. <sup>25</sup>Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.'<sup>26</sup>Now therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David my father.

<sup>27</sup>"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this

house that I have built! <sup>28</sup>Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, <sup>29</sup>that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. <sup>30</sup>And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive. . . .

<sup>46</sup>"If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near, <sup>47</sup>yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,'<sup>48</sup>if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name, <sup>49</sup>then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause <sup>50</sup>and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them <sup>51</sup>(for they are your people, and your heritage, which you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace). <sup>52</sup>Let your eyes be open to the plea of your servant and to the plea of your people Israel, giving

ear to them whenever they call to you. <sup>53</sup>For you separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be your heritage, as you declared through Moses your servant, when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.”

#### Solomon's Benediction

<sup>54</sup>Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and plea to the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven. <sup>55</sup>And he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying, <sup>56</sup>“Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant. <sup>57</sup>The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us, <sup>58</sup>that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers. <sup>59</sup>Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, <sup>60</sup>that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other. <sup>61</sup>Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.”

#### Solomon's Sacrifices

<sup>62</sup>Then the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD. <sup>63</sup>Solomon offered as peace offerings to the LORD 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.

## New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:1–18

### The Light of the Gospel

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. <sup>2</sup>But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. <sup>3</sup>And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup>In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup>For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup>For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

### Treasure in Jars of Clay

<sup>7</sup>But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. <sup>8</sup>We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; <sup>10</sup>always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. <sup>11</sup>For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup>So death is at work in us, but life in you.

<sup>13</sup>Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe,

and so we also speak, <sup>14</sup>knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. <sup>15</sup>For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

<sup>16</sup>So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup>as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

### Writing

Great and grievous, indeed, are these dangers and temptations, which every Christian must bear. We bear them even though each one were alone by himself. So every hour that we are in this vile life, we are attacked on all sides [2 Corinthians 4:8], chased and hunted down. We are moved to cry out and to pray that God would not allow us to become weary and faint [Isaiah 40:31; Hebrews 12:3] and to fall again into sin, shame, and unbelief. For otherwise it is impossible to overcome even the least temptation.

We Christians must be armed [Ephesians 6:10–18] and daily expect to be constantly attacked. No one may go on in security and carelessly, as though the devil were far from us. At all times we must expect and block his blows. Though I am now chaste, patient, kind, and in firm faith, the devil will this very hour send such an arrow into my heart that I can scarcely stand. For he is an enemy that never stops or becomes tired. So when one temptation stops, there always arise

others and fresh ones.

So there is no help or comfort except to run here, take hold of the Lord’s Prayer, and speak to God from the heart like this: “Dear Father, You have asked me to pray. Don’t let me fall because of temptations.” Then you will see that the temptations must stop and finally confess themselves conquered. If you try to help yourself by your own thoughts and counsel, you will only make the matter worse and give the devil more space. For he has a serpent’s head [Revelation 12:9]. If it finds an opening into which it can slip, the whole body will follow without stopping. But prayer can prevent him and drive him back.

—Large Catechism III 105, 109–11

### Hymnody

Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous;  
Bright with Thine own holiness,  
Glorious now, we press toward glory,  
And our lives our hopes confess.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise to Thee who light dost send!

Alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia without end!

—Thy Strong Word (*LSB* 578:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than we either desire or deserve, pour down upon us the abundance of Your mercy, forgiving those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things that we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H71)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 170–176 [291–297]

### 27 AUGUST

*Monica, Mother of Augustine*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Give the king your justice, | O God,\*  
and your righteousness to the | royal son!
- <sup>2</sup> May he judge your people  
with | righteousness,\*  
and your poor with | justice!
- <sup>3</sup> Let the mountains bear prosperity  
for the | people,\*  
and the hills, in | righteousness!
- <sup>4</sup> May he defend the cause of the poor  
of the people, give deliverance to the  
children of the | needy,\*  
and crush the op- | pressor!
- <sup>5</sup> May they fear you while the | sun endures,\*  
and as long as the moon,  
throughout all gener- | ations!
- <sup>6</sup> May he be like rain that falls  
on the | mown grass,\*  
like showers that wa- | ter the earth!
- <sup>7</sup> In his days may the righteous | flourish,\*  
and peace abound,  
till the moon | be no more!  
—Psalm 72:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 72*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 9:1–9; 10:1–13

The Lord Appears to Solomon

<sup>1</sup>As soon as Solomon had finished  
building the house of the LORD and the

king's house and all that Solomon desired  
to build, <sup>2</sup>the LORD appeared to Solomon a  
second time, as he had appeared to him at  
Gibeon. <sup>3</sup>And the LORD said to him, "I have  
heard your prayer and your plea, which you  
have made before me. I have consecrated  
this house that you have built, by putting  
my name there forever. My eyes and my  
heart will be there for all time. <sup>4</sup>And as for  
you, if you will walk before me, as David  
your father walked, with integrity of heart  
and uprightness, doing according to all that  
I have commanded you, and keeping my  
statutes and my rules, <sup>5</sup>then I will establish  
your royal throne over Israel forever, as I  
promised David your father, saying, 'You  
shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'  
<sup>6</sup>But if you turn aside from following me,  
you or your children, and do not keep my  
commandments and my statutes that I have  
set before you, but go and serve other gods  
and worship them, <sup>7</sup>then I will cut off Israel  
from the land that I have given them, and  
the house that I have consecrated for my  
name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel  
will become a proverb and a byword among  
all peoples. <sup>8</sup>And this house will become a  
heap of ruins. Everyone passing by it will  
be astonished and will hiss, and they will  
say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this  
land and to this house?' <sup>9</sup>Then they will say,  
'Because they abandoned the LORD their God  
who brought their fathers out of the land of  
Egypt and laid hold on other gods and wor-  
shipped them and served them. Therefore the  
LORD has brought all this disaster on them.'"

The Queen of Sheba

<sup>10:1</sup>Now when the queen of Sheba heard  
of the fame of Solomon concerning the name  
of the LORD, she came to test him with hard  
questions. <sup>2</sup>She came to Jerusalem with a

very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. <sup>3</sup>And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her. <sup>4</sup>And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, <sup>5</sup>the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the LORD, there was no more breath in her.

<sup>6</sup>And she said to the king, “The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, <sup>7</sup>but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard. <sup>8</sup>Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! <sup>9</sup>Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.” <sup>10</sup>Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices and precious stones. Never again came such an abundance of spices as these that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

<sup>11</sup>Moreover, the fleet of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir a very great amount of almug wood and precious stones. <sup>12</sup>And the king made of the almug wood supports for the house of the LORD and for the king’s house, also lyres and harps for the singers. No such almug wood has come or been seen to this day.

<sup>13</sup>And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land with her servants.

**New Testament Reading:  
2 Corinthians 5:1–21**

Our Heavenly Dwelling

<sup>1</sup>For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup>For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup>if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup>He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

<sup>6</sup>So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, <sup>7</sup>for we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

<sup>11</sup>Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. <sup>12</sup>We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to

boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. <sup>13</sup>For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. <sup>14</sup>For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; <sup>15</sup>and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

<sup>16</sup>From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## Writing

(Monica) was brought up in modesty and sobriety. She was made by You obedient to her parents rather than by them to You. When she reached marriageable age, she was given to a man and served him as lord. She tried to win him for You, speaking to him of You by her virtues through which You made her beautiful, so that her husband loved, respected and admired her. She bore with his infidelities

and never had a quarrel with her husband on this account. For she looked forward to Your mercy coming upon him, in hope that, as he came to believe in You, he might become chaste. . . .

Another gift with which You endowed that good servant of Yours, in whose womb You created me, my God, my mercy (Ps. 58:18), was that whenever she could, she reconciled dissident and quarrelling people. She showed herself so great a peacemaker that when she heard from both sides many bitter things, Monica would never reveal to one anything about the other unless it might help to reconcile them. . . .

At the end, when her husband had reached the end of his life in time, she succeeded in gaining him for You. After he was a baptized believer, she had no cause to complain of his behavior, which she had tolerated in one not yet a believer. She was also a servant of Your servants: any of them who knew her found much to praise in her, held her in honor, and loved her, for they felt Your presence in her heart, witnessed by the fruits of her holy way of life. She had “testimony to her good works” (1 Timothy 5:10). She had brought up her children, enduring travail as often as she saw them wandering away from You. Lastly, Lord—by Your gift You allow me to speak for Your servants, for before her falling asleep we were bound together in community in You after receiving the grace of Baptism—she exercised care for everybody as if they were all her own children. She served all as if she was a daughter to all of us.

—Augustine

## Hymnody

Jesus lives! For me He died,  
Hence will I, to Jesus living,  
Pure in heart and act abide,  
Praise to Him and glory giving.  
All I need God will dispense;  
This shall be my confidence.

—Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won  
(LSB 490:3)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, You strengthened Your patient servant Monica through spiritual discipline to persevere in offering her love, her prayers, and her tears for the conversion of her husband and of Augustine, their son. Deepen our devotion to bring others, even our own family, to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. (1081)

## Monica, Mother of Augustine

A native of North Africa, Monica (AD 333–387) was the devoted mother of St. Augustine. Throughout her life, she sought the spiritual welfare of her children, especially that of her brilliant son Augustine. Widowed at a young age, she devoted herself to her family, praying many years for Augustine's conversion. When Augustine left North Africa to go to Italy, she followed him to Rome and then to Milan. There she had the joy of witnessing her son's conversion to the Christian faith. Weakened by her travels, Monica died at Ostia, Italy, on the journey she had hoped would take her back to her native Africa. On some Church Year calendars, Monica is remembered on May 4.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 177–182 [298–303]

## 28 AUGUST

*Augustine of Hippo, Pastor and Theologian*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Great is the LORD and greatly | to  
be praised\*  
in the city | of our God!  
His holy mountain, <sup>2</sup> beautiful in elevation,  
is the joy of | all the earth,\*  
Mount Zion, in the far north,  
the city of the | great King.
- <sup>3</sup> Within her | citadels\*  
God has made himself known  
as a | fortress.
- <sup>4</sup> For behold, the kings as- | sembled;\*  
they came on to- | gether.
- <sup>5</sup> As soon as they saw it,  
they were as- | tounded;\*  
they were in panic; they | took to flight.
- <sup>6</sup> Trembling took hold | of them there,\*  
anguish as of a woman in | labor.
- <sup>7</sup> By the | east wind\*  
you shattered the ships of | Tarshish.
- <sup>8</sup> As we have heard, so have we seen  
in the city of the LORD of hosts,  
in the city | of our God,\*  
which God will establish for- | ever.  
—Psalm 48:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 48*

**Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 11:1–26**

Solomon Turns from the Lord

<sup>1</sup>Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, <sup>2</sup>from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, “You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. <sup>3</sup>He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. <sup>4</sup>For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. <sup>5</sup>For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. <sup>6</sup>So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. <sup>7</sup>Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup>And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.

The LORD Raises Adversaries

<sup>9</sup>And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice <sup>10</sup>and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded. <sup>11</sup>Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you,

I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. <sup>12</sup>Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. <sup>13</sup>However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.”

<sup>14</sup>And the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite. He was of the royal house in Edom. <sup>15</sup>For when David was in Edom, and Joab the commander of the army went up to bury the slain, he struck down every male in Edom <sup>16</sup>(for Joab and all Israel remained there six months, until he had cut off every male in Edom). <sup>17</sup>But Hadad fled to Egypt, together with certain Edomites of his father’s servants, Hadad still being a little child. <sup>18</sup>They set out from Midian and came to Paran and took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house and assigned him an allowance of food and gave him land. <sup>19</sup>And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him in marriage the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. <sup>20</sup>And the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh’s house. And Genubath was in Pharaoh’s house among the sons of Pharaoh. <sup>21</sup>But when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Let me depart, that I may go to my own country.” <sup>22</sup>But Pharaoh said to him, “What have you lacked with me that you are now seeking to go to your own country?” And he said to him, “Only let me depart.”

<sup>23</sup>God also raised up as an adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eliada, who had

fled from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah. <sup>24</sup>And he gathered men about him and became leader of a marauding band, after the killing by David. And they went to Damascus and lived there and made him king in Damascus. <sup>25</sup>He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon, doing harm as Hadad did. And he loathed Israel and reigned over Syria.

<sup>26</sup>Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, a servant of Solomon, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, also lifted up his hand against the king.

## New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 6:1–18

[The Ministry of Reconciliation]

<sup>1</sup>Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup>For 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. <sup>3</sup>We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; <sup>7</sup>by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as

sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

<sup>11</sup>We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. <sup>12</sup>You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. <sup>13</sup>In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also.

The Temple of the Living God

<sup>14</sup>Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup>What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

“I will make my dwelling among them  
and walk among them,  
and I will be their God,  
and they shall be my people.

<sup>17</sup>Therefore go out from their midst,  
and be separate from them,  
says the Lord,

and touch no unclean thing;  
then I will welcome you,

<sup>18</sup>and I will be a father to you,  
and you shall be sons and daughters  
to me,  
says the Lord Almighty.”

## Writing

The prophet says, “Come out from among them, and touch no unclean thing,” [Isaiah 52:11]. I also cry out and say to you, “Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing,” but with the touch of the heart, not of the body. For what is it to “touch the unclean thing” but to consent to sin? And

what is it to “come out from among them” but to rebuke the wicked, as far as can be done, according to each person’s grade and condition, with the maintenance of peace? If you are displeased at a man’s sin, then you have not “touched the unclean thing.” If you have reprov’d, rebuked, admonished him, and have administered, if the case required it, a suitable discipline that does not violate unity, then you have “come out from among them.” . . .

How many and vehement rebukes did Jeremiah preach against the sinners and wicked ones of his people. Yet he lived among them, he entered into the same temple with them, celebrated the same mysteries; he lived in that congregation of wicked men, but by his preaching “he came out from among them.” This is what it means “to come out from among them”; this is what it means to not “touch the unclean thing.” It means not consenting to them in will and not sparing them in word. I say this of Jeremiah, of Isaiah, of Daniel, and Ezekiel, and the rest of the prophets, who did not retire from the wicked people, lest they should desert the good who were mingled with that people.

—Augustine

### Hymnody

Gracious God, I come before Thee;  
Come Thou also unto me.  
Where we find Thee and adore Thee,  
There a heav’n on earth must be.  
To my heart, O enter Thou;  
Let it be Thy temple now!  
—Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty  
(LSB 901:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, the light of the minds that know You, the life of the souls that love You, and the strength of the hearts that serve You, give us strength to follow the example of Your servant Augustine of Hippo, so that knowing You we may truly love You and loving You we may fully serve You—for to serve You is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1082)

### Augustine of Hippo, Pastor and Theologian

Augustine was one of the greatest of the Latin Church Fathers and a significant influence in the formation of Western Christianity, including Lutheranism. Born in AD 354 in North Africa, Augustine’s early life was distinguished by exceptional advancement as a teacher of rhetoric. In his book *Confessions* he describes his life before his conversion to Christianity, when he was drawn into the moral laxity of the day and fathered an illegitimate son. Through the devotion of his sainted mother, Monica, and the preaching of Ambrose, bishop of Milan (AD 339–97), Augustine was converted to the Christian faith. During the great Pelagian controversies of the fifth century, Augustine emphasized the unilateral grace of God in the salvation of mankind. Bishop and theologian at Hippo in North Africa from AD 395 until his death in AD 430, Augustine was a man of great intelligence, a fierce defender of the orthodox faith, and a prolific writer. In addition to *Confessions*, Augustine’s book *City of God* had a great impact upon the Church throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 183–191 [304–312]

**29 AUGUST**

*The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist*

**Psalmody**

<sup>6</sup>I call upon you,  
for you will answer me, | O God;\*  
incline your ear to me; | hear my words.  
<sup>7</sup>Wondrously show your | steadfast love,\*  
O Savior of those who seek refuge from  
their adversaries at | your right hand.  
<sup>8</sup>Keep me as the apple | of your eye;\*  
hide me in the shadow | of your wings,  
<sup>9</sup>from the wicked who do me | violence,\*  
my deadly enemies who sur- | round me.  
<sup>10</sup>They close their hearts to | pity;\*  
with their mouths  
they speak ar- | rogantly.  
<sup>11</sup>They have now surrounded | our steps;\*  
they set their eyes to cast us | to the ground.  
<sup>12</sup>He is like a lion ea- | ger to tear,\*  
as a young lion lurking in | ambush.  
<sup>13</sup>Arise, | O LORD!\*  
Confront him, sub- | due him!  
Deliver my soul from the wicked by your  
sword, <sup>14</sup>from men by your hand, | O LORD,\*  
from men of the world  
whose portion is | in this life.  
You fill their womb with | treasure;\*  
they are satisfied with children, and they  
leave their abundance to their | infants.  
—Psalm 17:6–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 17*

**Old Testament Reading:  
1 Kings 11:42–12:9**

<sup>42</sup>And the time that Solomon reigned  
in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.  
<sup>43</sup>And Solomon slept with his fathers and was  
buried in the city of David his father. And  
Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

Rehoboam’s Folly

<sup>12:1</sup>Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all  
Israel had come to Shechem to make him  
king. <sup>2</sup>And as soon as Jeroboam the son of  
Nebat heard of it (for he was still in Egypt,  
where he had fled from King Solomon),  
then Jeroboam returned from Egypt. <sup>3</sup>And  
they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and  
all the assembly of Israel came and said to  
Rehoboam, <sup>4</sup>“Your father made our yoke  
heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service  
of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and  
we will serve you.” <sup>5</sup>He said to them, “Go  
away for three days, then come again to me.”  
So the people went away.

<sup>6</sup>Then King Rehoboam took counsel with  
the old men, who had stood before Solomon  
his father while he was yet alive, saying, “How  
do you advise me to answer this people?”  
<sup>7</sup>And they said to him, “If you will be a  
servant to this people today and serve them,  
and speak good words to them when you  
answer them, then they will be your servants  
forever.” <sup>8</sup>But he abandoned the counsel that  
the old men gave him and took counsel with  
the young men who had grown up with him  
and stood before him. <sup>9</sup>And he said to them,  
“What do you advise that we answer this  
people who have said to me, ‘Lighten the yoke  
that your father put on us?’”

## New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 7:1–16

<sup>1</sup>Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

Paul's Joy

<sup>2</sup>Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. <sup>3</sup>I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. <sup>4</sup>I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy.

<sup>5</sup>For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. <sup>6</sup>But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, <sup>7</sup>and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. <sup>8</sup>For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. <sup>9</sup>As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

<sup>10</sup>For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. <sup>11</sup>For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment!

At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. <sup>12</sup>So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. <sup>13</sup>Therefore we are comforted.

And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. <sup>14</sup>For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true. <sup>15</sup>And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. <sup>16</sup>I rejoice, because I have perfect confidence in you.

## Writing

Christ is risen from the dead, has ascended to heaven, and sits at the right hand of God in divine power and honor. Nevertheless, He is hiding His greatness, glory, majesty, and power. He allows His prophets and apostles to be expelled and murdered . . . . He allows His Christians to suffer want, trouble, and misfortune in the world. He acts as He did in the days of His flesh, when John the Baptist had to lose his head for the sake of a desperate harlot, while He, the Savior and Helper, said nothing about it, departed thence in a ship and withdrew to the solitude of the wilderness (Matt. 14:10ff., Mark 6:17, 32). Is He not a petty, childish God, who does not save Himself and allows His children to suffer as if He did not see how badly they were faring? . . . [I]f He sees and knows but cannot help, then He has no hands that are able to do

anything, nor does He have power to enable Him to save.

Hence the prophet Isaiah correctly says of God: “Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior” (45:15). . . . Now He lets our adversaries treat His Word, Sacraments, and Christians as they please. He lets us call and cry and says nothing, as though He were deep in thought or were busy or were out in the field or asleep and heard nothing as Elijah says of Baal (I Kings 18:27). . . .

Meanwhile Christians, baptized in His name, must hold still, must permit people to walk over them and must have patience. For in the kingdom of faith God wants to be small, but in the (future) kingdom of sight He will not be small but great. Then He will show that he saw the misery of His people and heard their crying and had a will inclined to help them, also power to help them. . . . For this appearance of the glory of the great God we must wait.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Then is our comfort this alone  
That we may meet before Your throne;  
To You, O faithful God, we cry  
For rescue in our misery.

—When In the Hour of Deepest Need  
(LSB 615:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You gave Your servant John the Baptist to be the forerunner of Your Son, Jesus Christ, in both his preaching of repentance and his innocent death. Grant that we, who have died and risen with Christ in Holy Baptism, may daily repent of our

sins, patiently suffer for the sake of the truth, and fearlessly bear witness to His victory over death; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F26)

### The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist

In contrast to the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (observed on June 24), this festival commemorates his beheading by the tetrach Herod Antipas (Mark 6:14–29). From the perspective of the world, it was an ignominious end to the John the Baptist’s life. Yet it was in fact a noble participation in the cross of Christ, which was John’s greatest glory of all. Christ Himself said that there had arisen none greater than St. John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11). He was the last of the Old Testament prophets and also the herald of the New Testament. As the forerunner of Christ, John fulfilled the prophecy that the great prophet Elijah would return before the great and terrible Day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5; Matthew 17:10–13). By his preaching and Baptism of repentance, John turned “the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers” (Malachi 4:6). And in the footsteps of the prophets who had gone before him—in anticipation of the Christ whose way he prepared—this servant of the Lord manifested the cross by the witness of his death.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 192–194 [313–315]

## 30 AUGUST

## Psalmsody

<sup>1</sup> Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly | beings,\*  
ascribe to the LORD glo- | ry  
and strength.

<sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the LORD the glory | due his  
name; \*  
worship the LORD in the splendor  
of | holiness.

<sup>3</sup> The voice of the LORD is over the | waters; \*  
the God of glory thunders,  
the LORD, over many | waters.

<sup>4</sup> The voice of the LORD is | powerful; \*  
the voice of the LORD is full of | majesty.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD sits enthroned o- | ver the flood; \*  
the LORD sits enthroned  
as king for- | ever.

<sup>11</sup> May the LORD give strength to his | people! \*  
May the LORD bless his people | with  
peace!

—Psalm 29:1–4, 10–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 75*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 12:20–13:5, 33–34

[The Kingdom Divided]

<sup>20</sup>And when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only.

<sup>21</sup>When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin, 180,000 chosen warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. <sup>22</sup>But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God: <sup>23</sup>“Say to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of

Judah, and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, <sup>24</sup>“Thus says the LORD, You shall not go up or fight against your relatives the people of Israel. Every man return to his home, for this thing is from me.” So they listened to the word of the LORD and went home again, according to the word of the LORD.

Jeroboam’s Golden Calves

<sup>25</sup>Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel.

<sup>26</sup>And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. <sup>27</sup>If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” <sup>28</sup>So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

<sup>29</sup>And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. <sup>30</sup>Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. <sup>31</sup>He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. <sup>32</sup>And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. <sup>33</sup>He went up to the altar that he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month that he had devised from his own heart. And he

instituted a feast for the people of Israel and went up to the altar to make offerings.

A Man of God Confronts Jeroboam

<sup>13:1</sup>And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel. Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings. <sup>2</sup>And the man cried against the altar by the word of the LORD and said, “O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.’” <sup>3</sup>And he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: ‘Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out.’” <sup>4</sup>And when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Seize him.” And his hand, which he stretched out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself. <sup>5</sup>The altar also was torn down, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

<sup>33</sup>After this thing Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people. Any who would, he ordained to be priests of the high places. <sup>34</sup>And this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth.

*Additional Reading: 1 Kings 14:1–16:28*

## New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 8:1–24

Encouragement to Give Generously

<sup>1</sup>We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup>for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. <sup>3</sup>For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, <sup>4</sup>begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—<sup>5</sup>and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. <sup>6</sup>Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. <sup>7</sup>But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

<sup>8</sup>I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. <sup>9</sup>For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. <sup>10</sup>And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. <sup>11</sup>So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. <sup>12</sup>For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. <sup>13</sup>For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness <sup>14</sup>your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be

fairness. <sup>15</sup>As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.”

#### Commendation of Titus

<sup>16</sup>But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you. <sup>17</sup>For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord. <sup>18</sup>With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. <sup>19</sup>And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will. <sup>20</sup>We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, <sup>21</sup>for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of man. <sup>22</sup>And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you. <sup>23</sup>As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. <sup>24</sup>So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.

#### Writing

No tradition was set up by the Holy Fathers for the purpose of meriting the forgiveness of sins, or righteousness. Rather, they were instituted for the sake of good order in the Church and for the sake of peace. When anyone wants to set up certain works to merit the forgiveness of sins, or righteousness, how will he know that these

works please God since there is no testimony of God’s Word? How, without God’s command and Word, will he make people certain of God’s will? Doesn’t God forbid people everywhere in the Prophets from setting up peculiar rites of worship without His commandment? In Ezekiel it is written, “Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor keep their rules, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I am the LORD your God; walk in My statutes, and be careful to obey My rules” (20:18–19). If people are allowed to set up religious rites, and through these rites merit grace, the religious rites of all the pagans will have to be approved. The rites instituted by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:26–33) and by others, apart from the Law, will have to be approved. What difference does it make? If we have been allowed to institute religious rites that help merit grace, or righteousness, why were the pagans and the Israelites not allowed the same? The religious rites of the pagans and the Israelites were rejected for the very reason that they believed they merited forgiveness of sins and righteousness by these rites. Yet they did not know the righteousness of faith. Finally, where are we made certain that rites instituted by men justify without God’s command, since nothing can be affirmed of God’s will without His Word? What if God does not approve these services? How, therefore, do the adversaries affirm that they justify? Without God’s Word and testimony, this cannot be affirmed. Paul says, “Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). Since these services have no testimony of God’s Word, conscience must doubt if they please God.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession XV (VIII) 13–17

## Hymnody

He undertakes a great exchange,  
 Puts on our human frame,  
 And in return gives us His realm,  
 His glory, and His name,  
 His glory, and His name.  
 —Let All Together Praise Our God  
 (LSB 389:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, heavenly Father, You have called us to be Your children and heirs of Your gracious promises in Christ Jesus. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may forsake all covetous desires and the inordinate love of riches. Deliver us from the pursuit of passing things that we may seek the kingdom of Your Son and trust in His righteousness and so find blessedness and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (195)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 V (III) 195–204 [316–325]

## 31 AUGUST

## Psalmody

<sup>15</sup> O mountain of God, mountain of | Bashan;\*  
 O many-peaked mountain,  
 mountain of | Bashan!  
<sup>16</sup> Why do you look with hatred,  
 O many-peaked | mountain,\*  
 at the mount that God desired  
 for his abode, yes, where the LORD  
 will dwell for- | ever?

<sup>17</sup> The chariots of God are twice ten thousand,  
 thousands upon | thousands;\*  
 the Lord is among them; Sinai  
 is now in the sanctu- | ary.

<sup>18</sup> You ascended on high, leading a host  
 of captives in your train and receiving gifts  
 a- | mong men,\*  
 even among the rebellious,  
 that the LORD God may | dwell there.

<sup>19</sup> Blessèd be the Lord,  
 who daily | bears us up;\*  
 God is our sal- | vation.

<sup>20</sup> Our God is a God of sal- | vation,\*  
 and to God, the Lord, belong  
 deliverances | from death.  
 —Psalm 68:15–20

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 70*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 16:29–17:24

Ahab Reigns in Israel

<sup>29</sup>In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. <sup>30</sup>And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. <sup>31</sup>And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him. <sup>32</sup>He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. <sup>33</sup>And Ahab made an Asherah. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. <sup>34</sup>In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up

its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.

#### Elijah Predicts a Drought

<sup>17:1</sup>Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.” <sup>2</sup>And the word of the LORD came to him: <sup>3</sup>“Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. <sup>4</sup>You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.” <sup>5</sup>So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup>And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. <sup>7</sup>And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

#### The Widow of Zarephath

<sup>8</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to him, <sup>9</sup>“Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” <sup>10</sup>So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” <sup>11</sup>And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” <sup>12</sup>And she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.” <sup>13</sup>And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear;

go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup>For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’” <sup>15</sup>And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. <sup>16</sup>The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.

#### Elijah Raises the Widow’s Son

<sup>17</sup>After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. <sup>18</sup>And she said to Elijah, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!” <sup>19</sup>And he said to her, “Give me your son.” And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. <sup>20</sup>And he cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?” <sup>21</sup>Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this child’s life come into him again.” <sup>22</sup>And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. <sup>23</sup>And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, “See, your son lives.” <sup>24</sup>And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.”

**New Testament Reading:  
2 Corinthians 9:1–15**

The Collection for Christians in Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup>Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, <sup>2</sup>for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them. <sup>3</sup>But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. <sup>4</sup>Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. <sup>5</sup>So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.

The Cheerful Giver

<sup>6</sup>The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup>Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup>And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. <sup>9</sup>As it is written,

“He has distributed freely,  
he has given to the poor;  
his righteousness endures forever.”

<sup>10</sup>He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup>You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to

God. <sup>12</sup>For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. <sup>13</sup>By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission flowing from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, <sup>14</sup>while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. <sup>15</sup>Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

*Additional Reading: 2 Corinthians 10:1–13:14*

**Writing**

In this matter the following distinction must be noted. The meaning of these expressions must be a necessity based on Christ’s ordinance, command, and will and based on our obligation, but not a necessity based on coercion. In other words, when the word *necessary* is used, it should be understood not as force, but only as the order of God’s unchanging will, whose debtors we are. His commandment points out that the creature should be obedient to its Creator. In other places (2 Corinthians 9:7; Philemon 14; and 1 Peter 5:2) something is said to be *of necessity* that is wrung from a person against his will, by force or otherwise, so that he acts outwardly for the sake of appearance, but without and against his will. God does not want such ‘hypocritical’ works. The people of the New Testament are to be a willing people (Psalm 110:3) and sacrifice freely (Psalm 54:6), “not reluctantly or under compulsion” (2 Corinthians 9:7). They are to be “obedient from the heart” (Romans 6:17), “for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). In this understanding, and in this sense, it is correctly said and taught that truly good

works should be done willingly, or from a voluntary spirit, by those whom God's Son has made free. The dispute about the voluntary nature of good works was engaged in by some people specifically to make this point. . . .

Regarding the unwilling and rebellious flesh, Paul says, "I discipline my body and keep it under control" (1 Corinthians 9:27) and "those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified [slain] the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). (See also Romans 8:13.) When it is asserted and taught that good works are free to believers in the sense that they are optional for them to do or not to do, this is false, and must be rejected. It is false to say that believers might or could act against ‹God's Law› and still have faith and God's favor and grace.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord IV 16–20

### Hymnody

I will praise Your great compassion,  
Faithful Father, God of grace,  
That with all our fallen race  
In our depth of degradation  
You had mercy so that we  
Might be saved eternally.

—Oh, How Great Is Your Compassion  
(LSB 559:5)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, the source of all that is just and good, nourish in us every virtue and bring to completion every good intent that we may grow in grace and bring forth the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B75)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 205–212 [326–333]

## 1 SEPTEMBER

*Joshua*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Clap your hands, all | peoples!\*  
Shout to God with loud | songs of joy!
- <sup>2</sup> For the LORD, the Most High,  
is | to be feared,\*  
a great king over | all the earth.
- <sup>3</sup> He subdued peoples | under us,\*  
and nations un- | der our feet.
- <sup>4</sup> He chose our heritage | for us,\*  
the pride of Jacob | whom he loves.
- <sup>5</sup> God has gone up | with a shout,\*  
the LORD with the sound of a | trumpet.
- <sup>6</sup> Sing praises to God, sing | praises!\*  
Sing praises to our King, sing | praises!
- <sup>7</sup> For God is the King of | all the earth,\*  
sing praises | with a psalm!
- <sup>8</sup> God reigns over the | nations;\*  
God sits on his | holy throne.
- <sup>9</sup> The princes of the peoples gather as the  
people of the God of | Abraham.\*  
For the shields of the earth belong to  
God; he is highly ex- | alted!
- Psalm 47

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 8*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 18:1–19

Elijah Confronts Ahab

<sup>1</sup>After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.” <sup>2</sup>So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria. <sup>3</sup>And Ahab called Obadiah, who was over the household. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly, <sup>4</sup>and when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.) <sup>5</sup>And Ahab said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys. Perhaps we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, and not lose some of the animals.” <sup>6</sup>So they divided the land between them to pass through it. Ahab went in one direction by himself, and Obadiah went in another direction by himself.

<sup>7</sup>And as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him. And Obadiah recognized him and fell on his face and said, “Is it you, my lord Elijah?” <sup>8</sup>And he answered him, “It is I. Go, tell your lord, ‘Behold, Elijah is here.’” <sup>9</sup>And he said, “How have I sinned, that you would give your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? <sup>10</sup>As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent to seek you. And when they would say, ‘He is not here,’ he would take an oath of the kingdom or nation, that they had not found you. <sup>11</sup>And now you say, ‘Go, tell your lord, ‘Behold, Elijah is here.’” <sup>12</sup>And as soon as I have gone from you, the Spirit of the LORD will carry you I know not where. And so, when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have feared the LORD

from my youth. <sup>13</sup>Has it not been told my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid a hundred men of the LORD’s prophets by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water? <sup>14</sup>And now you say, ‘Go, tell your lord, “Behold, Elijah is here”’; and he will kill me.” <sup>15</sup>And Elijah said, “As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today.” <sup>16</sup>So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him. And Ahab went to meet Elijah.

<sup>17</sup>When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is it you, you troubler of Israel?” <sup>18</sup>And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father’s house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals. <sup>19</sup>Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

## New Testament Reading: Ephesians 1:1–23

Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

<sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup>he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the

purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup>which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

<sup>11</sup>In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup>so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup>who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

#### Thanksgiving and Prayer

<sup>15</sup>For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup>that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, <sup>18</sup>having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>20</sup>that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right

hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup>And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

#### Writing

Joshua the son of Nun was the minister and successor of Moses, and the leader of the people of Israel who led them through the dry bed of the Jordan into the land of Canaan. He had the same name as our Savior, Jesus Christ [since in Hebrew “Joshua” and “Jesus” are the same name], and he was a type of Christ, who led the children of the promise of Abraham through the Jordan of this life’s troubles and of death into the restfulness of eternal life. . . . When Moses died, on the first day of the 2493rd year since the world’s creation, Joshua led the people of Israel into the land of Canaan, which was promised to their fathers. He won excellent and miraculous victories for God’s chosen ones. Having conquered the kings of Canaan, he distributed the land and finally died at the age of 110. In Hebrew his name is *Yehoshua* or *Yosua*, that is, “Savior,” “Helper.” In Greek his name is *Iesous* or *Iesus*.

—David Chytraeus

## Hymnody

Lord Jesus, my salvation,  
 My light, my life divine,  
 My only consolation,  
 O make me wholly Thine!  
 For Thou hast dearly bought me  
 With blood and bitter pain.  
 Let me, since Thou hast sought me,  
 Eternal life obtain.

—Let Me Be Thine Forever (LSB 689:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, Your servant Joshua led the children of Israel through the waters of the Jordan River into a land flowing with milk and honey. As our Joshua, lead us, we pray, through the waters of our Baptism into the promised land of our eternal home, where You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1083)

## Joshua

Joshua, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, is first mentioned in Exodus 17 when he was chosen by Moses to fight the Amalekites, whom he defeated in a brilliant military victory. He was placed in charge of the Tent of Meeting (Exodus 33:11) and was a member of the tribal representatives sent to survey the land of Canaan (Numbers 13:8). Later, he was appointed by God to succeed Moses as Israel's commander-in-chief. Joshua eventually led the Israelites across the Jordan River into the Promised Land and directed the Israelites' capture of Jericho. He is remembered especially for his final address to the Israelites, in which he challenged them to serve God faithfully (Joshua 24:1–27), concluding with the memorable words, "As

for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (24:15).

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 V (III) 213–222 [334–343]

## 2 SEPTEMBER

*Hannah*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> I give you thanks, O LORD,  
 with | my whole heart;\*  
 before the gods I | sing your praise;
- <sup>2</sup> I bow down toward your holy temple and  
 give thanks to your name for your steadfast  
 love and your | faithfulness,\*  
 for you have exalted above all things  
 your name | and your word.
- <sup>3</sup> On the day I called, you | answered me;\*  
 my strength of soul | you increased.
- <sup>4</sup> All the kings of the earth shall give you  
 thanks, | O LORD,\*  
 for they have heard the words | of  
 your mouth,
- <sup>5</sup> and they shall sing of the ways | of  
 the LORD,\*  
 for great is the glory | of the LORD.
- <sup>6</sup> For though the LORD is high,  
 he regards the | lowly,\*  
 but the haughty he knows | from afar.
- <sup>7</sup> Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
 you pre- | serve my life;\*  
 you stretch out your hand against the  
 wrath of my enemies, and your right  
 hand de- | livers me.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;\* your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

—Psalm 138

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 135*

## Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 18:20–40

The Prophets of Baal Defeated

<sup>20</sup>So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. <sup>21</sup>And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word. <sup>22</sup>Then Elijah said to the people, “I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men. <sup>23</sup>Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. <sup>24</sup>And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God.” And all the people answered, “It is well spoken.” <sup>25</sup>Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it.” <sup>26</sup>And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. <sup>27</sup>And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud,

for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.”

<sup>28</sup>And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. <sup>29</sup>And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.

<sup>30</sup>Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down. <sup>31</sup>Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, “Israel shall be your name,” <sup>32</sup>and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs of seed. <sup>33</sup>And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, “Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood.” <sup>34</sup>And he said, “Do it a second time.” And they did it a second time. And he said, “Do it a third time.” And they did it a third time. <sup>35</sup>And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water.

<sup>36</sup>And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. <sup>37</sup>Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” <sup>38</sup>Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood

and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. <sup>39</sup>And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.” <sup>40</sup>And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.” And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.

**New Testament Reading:  
Ephesians 2:1–22**

By Grace Through Faith

<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—<sup>3</sup>among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup>not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

One in Christ

<sup>11</sup>Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the

uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup>remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup>And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup>For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

**Writing**

“For it is written: Rejoice, O barren one that dost not bear; break forth and shout, thou who art not in travail; for the desolate hath more children than she who hath a husband.” (Gal. 4:27)

Paul quotes this passage, which is completely allegorical, from the prophet Isaiah. It is written, he says, that the mother

of many children, who has a husband, must grow sick and perish, while the barren one, who does not bear, must have very many children. Hannah sings the same way in her canticle, from which Isaiah took this prophecy (1 Sam. 2:4–5): “The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.” It is an amazing thing, she says: the one who was prolific will be barren, and the one who was barren will be prolific. Those who were mighty, satisfied, alive, righteous, blessed, rich, and glorious will be feeble, hungry, sentenced to death, sinful, condemned, poor, and shameful; and, on the other hand, the feeble and the hungry will be mighty and satisfied.

With this allegory from the prophet Isaiah, Paul shows the difference between Hagar and Sarah, that is, between the synagog and the church, or between the Law and the Gospel. . . . [I]f they follow the Law and perform its outward works, they think they are righteous. All such men are slaves, not free men, because they are sons of Hagar, who gives birth into slavery. If they are slaves, they do not share in the inheritance but are cast out of the house. “The slaves do not continue in the house forever” (John 8:35); in fact, they have now been thrown out of the kingdom of grace and freedom. “He who does not believe is condemned already” (John 3:18).

Therefore they remain under the curse of the Law, under sin, death, and the power of the devil, under the wrath and judgment of God.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

By grace God’s Son, our only Savior,  
Came down to earth to bear our sin.  
Was it because of your own merit  
That Jesus died your soul to win?  
No, it was grace, and grace alone,  
That brought Him from His heav’nly throne.

—By Grace I’m Saved (*LSB* 566:3)

## Prayer of the Day

God the Father Almighty, maker of all things, You looked on the affliction of Your barren servant Hannah and did not forget her but answered her prayers with the gift of a son. So hear our supplications and petitions and fill our emptiness; give us faithfulness in prayer, trust in Your provision, and the ability to accept Your will so that we, like Hannah, might render unto You all thankfulness and praise, and delight in the miraculous birth of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1084)

## Hannah

Hannah was the favored wife of Elkanah, the Ephraimite, and the devout mother of the prophet Samuel. He was born to her after years of bitter barrenness (1 Samuel 1:6–8) and fervent prayers for a son (1 Samuel 1:9–18). After she weaned her son, Hannah expressed her gratitude by returning him for service in the house of the Lord at Shiloh (1 Samuel 1:24–28). Her prayer (psalm) of thanksgiving (1 Samuel 2:1–10) begins with the words “My heart exults in LORD; my strength is exalted in the LORD.” This song foreshadows the Magnificat, the Song of Mary centuries later (Luke 1:46–55). The name *Hannah* derives from the Hebrew word for “grace.” She is remembered and honored

for joyfully having kept the vow she made before her son's birth and offering him for lifelong service to God.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 223–234 [344–355]

## 3 SEPTEMBER

*Gregory the Great, Pastor*

### Psalmody

- <sup>57</sup>The LORD is my | portion;\*  
I promise to | keep your words.
- <sup>58</sup>I entreat your favor with | all my heart;\*  
be gracious to me according  
to your | promise.
- <sup>59</sup>When I think | on my ways,\*  
I turn my feet to your testi- | monies;
- <sup>60</sup>I hasten and do | not delay\*  
to keep your com- | mandments.
- <sup>61</sup>Though the cords of the wicked  
en- | snare me,\*  
I do not for- | get your law.
- <sup>62</sup>At midnight I rise to | praise you,\*  
because of your just and  
righ- | teous decrees.
- <sup>63</sup>I am a companion of all who | fear you,\*  
of those who keep your | precepts.
- <sup>64</sup>The earth, O LORD, is full  
of your | steadfast love;\*  
teach me your | statutes!  
—Psalm 119:57–64

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 108*

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 19:1–21

Elijah Flees Jezebel

<sup>1</sup>Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup>Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” <sup>3</sup>Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

<sup>4</sup>But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” <sup>5</sup>And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.” <sup>6</sup>And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. <sup>7</sup>And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, “Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.” <sup>8</sup>And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

The LORD Speaks to Elijah

<sup>9</sup>There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” <sup>10</sup>He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” <sup>11</sup>And he said, “Go out and

stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup>And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.

<sup>13</sup>And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” <sup>14</sup>He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” <sup>15</sup>And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. <sup>16</sup>And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. <sup>17</sup>And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. <sup>18</sup>Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

#### The Call of Elisha

<sup>19</sup>So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. <sup>20</sup>And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and

said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” <sup>21</sup>And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

*Additional Reading: 1 Kings 20:1–22:53*

#### New Testament Reading: Ephesians 3:1–21

The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed

<sup>1</sup>For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—  
<sup>2</sup>assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup>how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. <sup>4</sup>When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup>which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

<sup>7</sup>Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. <sup>8</sup>To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, <sup>10</sup>so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and

authorities in the heavenly places. <sup>11</sup>This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, <sup>12</sup>in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. <sup>13</sup>So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Strength

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup>that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

<sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

**Writing**

“To me,” said [Paul], “who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given.” What grace? “To preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things . . .”

Paul himself was sent to the Gentiles, the other apostles to the circumcised. The more marvelous and astonishing commission was

given, said Paul, “to me, who am less than the least.” This, too, was of grace: that he who was least should have the greatest things entrusted to him; that he should be made the herald of these tidings. . . .

He calls it a mystery for this reason: neither did the angels know it nor was it manifest to anyone else. . . . Angels knew only this, that “the Lord’s portion was His people” (Deuteronomy 32:8–9). . . . For the Gospel says: “He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Not a word about the Gentiles. But what concerns the Gentiles, the Spirit reveals. The angels knew that the Gentiles were called. But that they were called to the same privileges as Israel, yes, even to sit upon the throne of God, who would ever have expected this? Who would ever have believed? . . .

It is evident from what the apostle himself has written that God has done “abundantly above all that we ask or think.” For I indeed pray, said Paul, but He of Himself, even without any prayer of mine, will do works greater than all we ask, not simply “greater” nor “abundantly greater,” but “exceeding abundantly.” And this is evident from “the power that works in us,” for neither did we ever ask these things nor did we expect them.

“Unto Him be the glory,” [Paul] concludes, “in the Church and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

—John Chrysostom

**Hymnody**

In suff’ring be Thy love my peace,  
 In weakness be Thy love my pow’r;  
 And when the storms of life shall cease,

O Jesus, in that final hour,  
 Be Thou my rod and staff and guide,  
 And draw me safely to Thy side!  
 —Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me  
 (LSB 683:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and merciful God, You raised up Gregory of Rome to be a pastor to those who shepherd God's flock and inspired him to send missionaries to preach the Gospel to the English people. Preserve in Your Church the catholic and apostolic faith that Your people may continue to be fruitful in every good work and receive the crown of glory that never fades away; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1085)

### Gregory the Great

One of the great leaders in Europe at the close of the sixth century, Gregory served in both the secular and sacred arenas of his era. As mayor of Rome, he restored economic vitality to his native city, which had been weakened by enemy invasions, pillage, and plague. After he sold his extensive properties and donated the proceeds to help the poor, he entered into full-time service in the Church. On September 3, in AD 590, Gregory was elected to lead the Church in Rome. As bishop of Rome, he oversaw changes and growth in the areas of church music and liturgical development, missionary outreach to northern Europe, and the establishment of a Church Year calendar still used by many church bodies in the Western world today. His book on pastoral care became a standard until the twentieth century.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 V (III) 235–240 [356–361]

## 4 SEPTEMBER

*Moses*

### Psalmody

- <sup>13</sup> Return, O LORD! | How long?\*  
 Have pity on your | servants!
- <sup>14</sup> Satisfy us in the morning with  
 your | steadfast love,\*  
 that we may rejoice and be glad | all our  
 days.
- <sup>15</sup> Make us glad for as many days  
 as you have af- | flicted us,\*  
 and for as many years  
 as we have seen | evil.
- <sup>16</sup> Let your work be shown to your | servants,\*  
 and your glorious power  
 to their | children.
- <sup>17</sup> Let the favor of the Lord our God be  
 upon us, and establish the work  
 of our hands up- | on us;\*  
 yes, establish the work | of our hands!  
 —Psalm 90:13–17

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 107*

### Old Testament Reading: 2 Kings 2:1–18

Elijah Taken to Heaven

<sup>1</sup>Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.

<sup>2</sup>And Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So

they went down to Bethel. <sup>3</sup>And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?” And he said, “Yes, I know it; keep quiet.”

<sup>4</sup>Elijah said to him, “Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. <sup>5</sup>The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?” And he answered, “Yes, I know it; keep quiet.”

<sup>6</sup>Then Elijah said to him, “Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. <sup>7</sup>Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. <sup>8</sup>Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.

<sup>9</sup>When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.” And Elisha said, “Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me.” <sup>10</sup>And he said, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so.” <sup>11</sup>And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. <sup>12</sup>And Elisha saw it and he cried,

“My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw him no more.

Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. <sup>13</sup>And he took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. <sup>14</sup>Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water, saying, “Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

Elisha Succeeds Elijah

<sup>15</sup>Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. <sup>16</sup>And they said to him, “Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men. Please let them go and seek your master. It may be that the Spirit of the LORD has caught him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send.” <sup>17</sup>But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, “Send.” They sent therefore fifty men. And for three days they sought him but did not find him. <sup>18</sup>And they came back to him while he was staying at Jericho, and he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go?’”

## New Testament Reading: Ephesians 4:1–24

Unity in the Body of Christ

<sup>1</sup>I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup>with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup>eager to

maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—<sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. <sup>7</sup>But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. <sup>8</sup>Therefore it says,

“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,  
and he gave gifts to men.”

<sup>9</sup>(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? <sup>10</sup>He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

<sup>11</sup>And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup>so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup>Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

#### The New Life

<sup>17</sup>Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. <sup>18</sup>They are

darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. <sup>19</sup>They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. <sup>20</sup>But that is not the way you learned Christ!—<sup>21</sup>assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, <sup>22</sup>to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup>and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, <sup>24</sup>and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

#### Writing

You, dearly beloved, whom I address in no less earnest terms than those of the blessed apostle Peter, “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession,” built upon the impregnable rock, Christ, and joined to the Lord our Savior by His true assumption of our flesh, remain firm in the faith, which you have professed before many witnesses and in which you were reborn through water and the Holy Spirit, and received the anointing of salvation and the seal of eternal life. But “if anyone preaches to you anything besides that which you have learned, let him be anathema”; refuse to put wicked fables before the clearest truth, and what you may happen to read or hear contrary to the rule of the catholic and apostolic creed, judge it altogether deadly and diabolical. . . . Indeed, they put on a cloak of piety and chastity, but under this deceit they conceal the filthiness of their acts, and from the recesses of their ungodly heart hurl shafts to wound the simple. . . . A mighty bulwark is a sound

faith, a true faith, to which nothing has to be added or taken away, because unless it is one, it is no faith, as the apostle says, “one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in us all.” Cling to this unity, dearly beloved, with minds unshaken, and in it “follow after” all “holiness.” In it carry out the Lord’s commands, because “without faith it is impossible to please God,” and without it nothing is holy, nothing pure, nothing alive, “for the just lives by faith,” and he who by the devil’s deception loses it is dead though living, because as righteousness is gained by faith, so, too, by a true faith is eternal life gained, as our Lord and Savior says. And this is life eternal, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. May He make you to advance and persevere to the end, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

—Leo the Great

### Hymnody

Help us to serve You evermore  
 With hearts both pure and lowly;  
 And may Your Word, that light divine,  
 Shine on in splendor holy  
 That we repentance show,  
 In faith ever grow;  
 The pow’r of sin destroy  
 And evils that annoy.  
 O make us faithful Christians.

—Lord Jesus Christ, the Church’s  
 Head (*LSB* 647:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, through the prophet Moses, You began the prophetic

pattern of teaching Your people the true faith and demonstrating through miracles Your presence in creation to heal it of its brokenness. Grant that Your Church may see in Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the final end-times prophet whose teaching and miracles continue in Your Church through the healing medicine of the Gospel and the Sacraments; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1086)

### Moses

Moses was born in Egypt several generations after Joseph brought his father, Jacob, and his brothers there to escape a famine in the land of Canaan. The descendants of Jacob had been enslaved by the Egyptians and were ordered to kill all their male children. When Moses was born, his mother put him in a basket and set it afloat in the Nile River. He was found by Pharaoh’s daughter and raised as her son (Exodus 2:1–10). At age forty, Moses killed an Egyptian taskmaster and fled to the land of Midian, where he worked as a shepherd for forty years. Then the Lord called him to return to Egypt and tell Pharaoh, “Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness” (Exodus 5:1). Eventually Pharaoh gave in, and after the Israelites celebrated the first Passover, Moses led them out. At the Red Sea the Egyptian army was destroyed, and the Israelites passed to safety on dry land (Exodus 12–15). At Mount Sinai, they were given the Law and erected the tabernacle (Exodus 19–40). But because of disobedience, they had to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Moses himself was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, though God allowed him to view it (Deuteronomy 34). In the New Testament,

Moses is referred to as lawgiver and prophet. The first five books of the Bible are attributed to him.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 241–248 [362–369]

## 5 SEPTEMBER

*Zacharias and Elizabeth*

### Psalmody

<sup>8</sup>You have kept count of my tossings;  
put my tears in your | bottle.\*

Are they not | in your book?

<sup>9</sup>Then my enemies will turn back  
in the day | when I call.\*

This I know, that God is | for me.

<sup>10</sup>In God, whose | word I praise,\*  
in the LORD, whose | word I praise,

<sup>11</sup>in God I trust; I shall not | be afraid.\*  
What can man | do to me?

<sup>12</sup>I must perform my vows to you, | O God,\*  
I will render thank offerings | to you.

<sup>13</sup>For you have delivered my soul from death,  
yes, my feet from | falling,\*  
that I may walk before God  
in the | light of life.

—Psalm 56:8–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 56*

### Old Testament Reading: 2 Kings 2:19–25; 4:1–7

[Elisha Succeeds Elijah]

<sup>19</sup>Now the men of the city said to Elisha, “Behold, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees, but the water is bad, and the

land is unfruitful.” <sup>20</sup>He said, “Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him. <sup>21</sup>Then he went to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, “Thus says the LORD, I have healed this water; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it.” <sup>22</sup>So the water has been healed to this day, according to the word that Elisha spoke.

<sup>23</sup>He went up from there to Bethel, and while he was going up on the way, some small boys came out of the city and jeered at him, saying, “Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!” <sup>24</sup>And he turned around, and when he saw them, he cursed them in the name of the LORD. And two she-bears came out of the woods and tore forty-two of the boys. <sup>25</sup>From there he went on to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria. . . .

Elisha and the Widow’s Oil

<sup>4:1</sup>Now the wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD, but the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.” <sup>2</sup>And Elisha said to her, “What shall I do for you? Tell me; what have you in the house?” And she said, “Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil.” <sup>3</sup>Then he said, “Go outside, borrow vessels from all your neighbors, empty vessels and not too few. <sup>4</sup>Then go in and shut the door behind yourself and your sons and pour into all these vessels. And when one is full, set it aside.” <sup>5</sup>So she went from him and shut the door behind herself and her sons. And as she poured they brought the vessels to her. <sup>6</sup>When the vessels were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another vessel.” And he said

to her, “There is not another.” Then the oil stopped flowing. <sup>7</sup>She came and told the man of God, and he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the rest.”

### New Testament Reading: Ephesians 4:25–5:14

[The New Life]

<sup>25</sup>Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. <sup>26</sup>Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and give no opportunity to the devil. <sup>28</sup>Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. <sup>29</sup>Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Walk in Love

<sup>5:1</sup>Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. <sup>2</sup>And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

<sup>3</sup>But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

<sup>4</sup>Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup>For

you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. <sup>6</sup>Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. <sup>7</sup>Therefore do not become partners with them; <sup>8</sup>for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light <sup>9</sup>(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), <sup>10</sup>and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. <sup>12</sup>For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. <sup>13</sup>But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, <sup>14</sup>for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

### Writing

By the wedding ring of faith Christ shares in the sins, death, and pains of hell which are his bride's. As a matter of fact, he makes them his own and acts as if they were his own and as if he himself had sinned; he suffered, died, and descended into hell that he might overcome them all. Now since it was such a one who did all this, and death and hell could not swallow him up, these were necessarily swallowed up by him in a mighty duel; for his righteousness is greater than the sins of all men, his life stronger than death, his salvation more invincible than hell. Thus the believing soul by means of the pledge of its faith is free in Christ, its

bridegroom, free from all sins, secure against death and hell, and is endowed with the eternal righteousness, life, and salvation of Christ its bridegroom. So he takes to himself a glorious bride, “without spot or wrinkle, cleansing her by the washing of water with the word.” [Cf. Eph. 5:26-27.] of life, that is, by faith in the Word of life, righteousness, and salvation. In this way he marries her in faith, steadfast love, and in mercies, righteousness, and justice, as Hos. 2[:19–20] says.

Who then can fully appreciate what this royal marriage means? Who can understand the riches of the glory of this grace? Here this rich and divine bridegroom Christ marries this poor, wicked harlot, redeems her from all her evil, and adorns her with all his goodness. Her sins cannot now destroy her, since they are laid upon Christ and swallowed up by him. And she has that righteousness in Christ, her husband, of which she may boast as of her own and which she can confidently display alongside her sins in the face of death and hell and say, “If I have sinned, yet my Christ, in whom I believe, has not sinned, and all his is mine and all mine is his,” as the bride in the Song of Solomon [2:16] says, “My beloved is mine and I am his.”

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

May we Thy precepts, Lord, fulfill  
And do on earth our Father’s will  
As angels do above;  
Still walk in Christ, the living way,  
With all Thy children and obey  
The law of Christian love.

—May We Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfill  
(LSB 698:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, who alone knits all infants in the womb, You chose improbable servants—old and childless—to conceive and parent the forerunner of Christ and, in so doing, demonstrated again Your strength in weakness. Grant us, who are as unlikely and unworthy as Zechariah and Elizabeth, the opportunity to love and serve You according to Your good and gracious will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. (1087)

### Zechariah and Elizabeth

Zechariah and Elizabeth were “righteous before God, walking blamelessly in the commandments and statutes of the Lord” (Luke 1:6). Zechariah, a priest in the Jerusalem temple, was greeted by the angel Gabriel, who announced that Zechariah and Elizabeth would become parents of a son. Initially, Zechariah did not believe Gabriel’s announcement because of their old age. For his disbelief, Zechariah became unable to speak. After their son was born, Elizabeth named their son John. Zechariah confirmed his wife’s choice, and his ability to speak was restored. In response, he sang the Benedictus, a magnificent summary of God’s promises in the Old Testament and a prediction of John’s work as forerunner to Jesus (Luke 1:68–79). Zechariah and Elizabeth are remembered as examples of faithfulness and piety.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 249–256 [370–377]

6 SEPTEMBER

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup>Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it la- | bor in vain.\*

Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays a- | wake in vain.

<sup>2</sup>It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of | anxious toil,\* for he gives to his be- | loved sleep.

<sup>3</sup>Behold, children are a heritage | from the LORD,\* the fruit of the womb | a reward.

<sup>4</sup>Like arrows in the hand of a | warrior\* are the children | of one's youth.

<sup>5</sup>Blessèd is the man who fills his quiver | with them!\*

He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies | in the gate.

—Psalm 127

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 128*

**Old Testament Reading:  
2 Kings 4:8–22, 32–37**

Elisha and the Shunammite Woman

<sup>8</sup>One day Elisha went on to Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to eat some food. So whenever he passed that way, he would turn in there to eat food. <sup>9</sup>And she said to her husband, “Behold now, I know that this is a holy man of God who is continually passing our way. <sup>10</sup>Let us make a small room on the roof with walls and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that whenever he comes to us, he can go in there.”

<sup>11</sup>One day he came there, and he turned into the chamber and rested there. <sup>12</sup>And he said to Gehazi his servant, “Call this Shunammite.” When he had called her, she

stood before him. <sup>13</sup>And he said to him, “Say now to her, ‘See, you have taken all this trouble for us; what is to be done for you? Would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?’” She answered, “I dwell among my own people.” <sup>14</sup>And he said, “What then is to be done for her?” Gehazi answered, “Well, she has no son, and her husband is old.” <sup>15</sup>He said, “Call her.” And when he had called her, she stood in the doorway. <sup>16</sup>And he said, “At this season, about this time next year, you shall embrace a son.” And she said, “No, my lord, O man of God; do not lie to your servant.” <sup>17</sup>But the woman conceived, and she bore a son about that time the following spring, as Elisha had said to her.

Elisha Raises the Shunammite's Son

<sup>18</sup>When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. <sup>19</sup>And he said to his father, “Oh, my head, my head!” The father said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.” <sup>20</sup>And when he had lifted him and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died. <sup>21</sup>And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door behind him and went out. <sup>22</sup>Then she called to her husband and said, “Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again.” . . .

<sup>32</sup>When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. <sup>33</sup>So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD. <sup>34</sup>Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child

became warm. <sup>35</sup>Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. <sup>36</sup>Then he summoned Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.” So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, “Pick up your son.” <sup>37</sup>She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out.

### New Testament Reading: Ephesians 5:15–33

[Walk in Love]

<sup>15</sup>Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup>making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup>Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup>And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup>giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup>submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives and Husbands

<sup>22</sup>Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup>Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup>that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>so that he might present the church to

himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup>In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup>because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup>“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup>This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup>However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

### Writing

The Church is not only the fellowship of outward objects and rites, as other governments, but at its core, it is a fellowship of faith and of the Holy Spirit in hearts. Yet this fellowship has outward marks so that it can be recognized. These marks are the pure doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. This Church alone is called Christ’s body, which Christ renews, sanctifies, and governs by His Spirit. Paul testifies about this when he says, “And gave Him as head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:22–23). Those in whom Christ does not act are not the members of Christ. The adversaries admit this too. The wicked are “dead” members of the Church. We wonder why the adversaries have found fault with our description that speaks of living members. Neither have we said anything new. Paul has defined the Church precisely in the same way, that it should be cleansed in order to be

holy. He adds the outward marks, the Word and Sacraments. For he says:

Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the Church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25–27)

In the Confession, we have presented this sentence almost word for word. The Church is defined by the Third Article of the Creed, which teaches us to believe that there is a holy Catholic Church. The wicked indeed are not a holy Church. The words that follow, namely, “the communion of saints,” seems to be added in order to explain what the Church signifies: the congregation of saints, who have with each other the fellowship of the same Gospel or doctrine and the same Holy Spirit, who renews, sanctifies, and governs their hearts.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession VII–VIII (IV) 5–8

### Hymnody

The Church’s one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;  
She is His new creation  
By water and the Word.  
From heav’n He came and sought her  
To be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her,  
And for her life He died.

—The Church’s One Foundation  
(LSB 644:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, we implore You, let Your continual pity cleanse and defend Your Church; and because she cannot continue in safety without Your aid, preserve her evermore by Your help and goodness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H75)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 257–261 [378–382]

## 7 SEPTEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, my heart is not lifted up;  
my eyes are not | raised too high;\*  
I do not occupy myself with things too  
great and too marvel- | ous for me.
- <sup>2</sup> But I have calmed and quieted my soul,  
like a weaned child with its | mother;\*  
like a weaned child is my soul  
with- | in me.
- <sup>3</sup> O Israel, hope | in the LORD\*  
from this time forth and for- | evermore.  
—Psalm 131

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 77*

### Old Testament Reading: 2 Kings 4:38–5:8

Elisha Purifies the Deadly Stew

<sup>38</sup>And Elisha came again to Gilgal when there was a famine in the land. And as the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, “Set on the large pot,

and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.”

<sup>39</sup>One of them went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and cut them up into the pot of stew, not knowing what they were. <sup>40</sup>And they poured out some for the men to eat. But while they were eating of the stew, they cried out, “O man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they could not eat it. <sup>41</sup>He said, “Then bring flour.” And he threw it into the pot and said, “Pour some out for the men, that they may eat.” And there was no harm in the pot.

<sup>42</sup>A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And Elisha said, “Give to the men, that they may eat.” <sup>43</sup>But his servant said, “How can I set this before a hundred men?” So he repeated, “Give them to the men, that they may eat, for thus says the LORD, ‘They shall eat and have some left.’” <sup>44</sup>So he set it before them. And they ate and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.

#### Naaman Healed of Leprosy

<sup>5:1</sup>Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. <sup>2</sup>Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman’s wife. <sup>3</sup>She said to her mistress, “Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.” <sup>4</sup>So Naaman went in and told his lord, “Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel.”

<sup>5</sup>And the king of Syria said, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.”

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. <sup>6</sup>And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, “When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy.” <sup>7</sup>And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me.”

<sup>8</sup>But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, “Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel.”

#### New Testament Reading: Ephesians 6:1–24

##### Children and Parents

<sup>1</sup>Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup>“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

<sup>4</sup>Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

##### Slaves and Masters

<sup>5</sup>Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, <sup>6</sup>not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, <sup>7</sup>rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, <sup>8</sup>knowing that whatever

good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. <sup>9</sup>Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

The Whole Armor of God

<sup>10</sup>Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup>Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup>and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup>and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, <sup>18</sup>praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup>and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Final Greetings

<sup>21</sup>So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will

tell you everything. <sup>22</sup>I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

<sup>23</sup>Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

**Writing**

We must remember that we fight not with flesh and blood but against the powers of darkness and spiritual deception (Eph. 6:13). Because the deceptiveness of temptation far exceeds our strength (really, our weakness), there is great danger in underestimating its power lest we give in to temptation, are overcome by it, and so drown in perdition. Therefore, first of all we pray asking that Satan not have freedom to tempt us as much as either he would or could. We also ask that he tempt us only as much as God permits and gives permission (Job 1:12). We pray that our heavenly Father would not cast us off and deliver us to the lust, to the treasons, and to the power of this Tempter. We pray that he would remove and temper the temptation and not allow us to be tempted past that which by his grace and gift we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). . . .

Now this petition contains a general confession for the weakness and infirmity in this life in the whole Church, that is the children of God. When we pray that we may not give in to temptation nor be overcome by it, we acknowledge and confess that by our own strength we are not able to resist any temptations. We acknowledge that this is the work of God's grace. We acknowledge that after we have received new spiritual

strength through our rebirth, God's grace  
and strength directly follow.

—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

Triune God, be Thou our stay;  
O let us perish never!  
Cleanse us from our sins, we pray,  
And grant us life forever.  
Keep us from the evil one;  
Uphold our faith most holy,  
And let us trust Thee solely  
With humble hearts and lowly.  
Let us put God's armor on,  
With all true Christians running  
Our heav'nly race and shunning  
The devil's wiles and cunning.  
Amen, amen! This be done;  
So sing we, "Alleluia!"

—Triune God, Be Thou Our Stay  
(LSB 505:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Grant to us, Lord, the Spirit to think and  
do always such things as are right, that we,  
who cannot do anything that is good without  
You, may be enabled by You to live according  
to Your will; through Jesus Christ, Your Son,  
our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and  
the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
(H68)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 262–268 [383–389]

## 8 SEPTEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>12</sup> O God, be not | far from me;\*  
O my God, make haste to | help me!  
<sup>13</sup> May my accusers be put to shame | and  
consumed;\*  
with scorn and disgrace may they be  
covered who | seek my hurt.  
<sup>14</sup> But I will hope con- | tinually\*  
and will praise you yet | more and more.  
<sup>15</sup> My mouth will tell of your righteous acts,  
of your deeds of salvation | all the day,\*  
for their number is past my | knowledge.  
<sup>16</sup> With the mighty deeds of the  
Lord GOD | I will come;\*  
I will remind them of your  
righteousness, | yours alone.  
—Psalm 71:12–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 69*

### Old Testament Reading: 2 Kings 5:9–27

[Naaman Healed of Leprosy]

<sup>9</sup>So Naaman came with his horses and  
chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's  
house. <sup>10</sup>And Elisha sent a messenger to him,  
saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven  
times, and your flesh shall be restored, and  
you shall be clean." <sup>11</sup>But Naaman was angry  
and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought  
that he would surely come out to me and  
stand and call upon the name of the LORD  
his God, and wave his hand over the place  
and cure the leper. <sup>12</sup>Are not Abana and  
Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than  
all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in  
them and be clean?" So he turned and went  
away in a rage. <sup>13</sup>But his servants came near  
and said to him, "My father, it is a great word  
the prophet has spoken to you; will you not

do it? Has he actually said to you, ‘Wash, and be clean?’” <sup>14</sup>So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

#### Gehazi’s Greed and Punishment

<sup>15</sup>Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, “Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant.” <sup>16</sup>But he said, “As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none.” And he urged him to take it, but he refused. <sup>17</sup>Then Naaman said, “If not, please let there be given to your servant two mules’ load of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the LORD. <sup>18</sup>In this matter may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon your servant in this matter.” <sup>19</sup>He said to him, “Go in peace.”

But when Naaman had gone from him a short distance, <sup>20</sup>Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, “See, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him.” <sup>21</sup>So Gehazi followed Naaman. And when Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and said, “Is all well?” <sup>22</sup>And he said, “All is well. My master has sent me to say, ‘There have just now come to me from the hill country of Ephraim

two young men of the sons of the prophets. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing.’” <sup>23</sup>And Naaman said, “Be pleased to accept two talents.” And he urged him and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothing, and laid them on two of his servants. And they carried them before Gehazi. <sup>24</sup>And when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and put them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed. <sup>25</sup>He went in and stood before his master, and Elisha said to him, “Where have you been, Gehazi?” And he said, “Your servant went nowhere.” <sup>26</sup>But he said to him, “Did not my heart go when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Was it a time to accept money and garments, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male servants and female servants? <sup>27</sup>Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever.” So he went out from his presence a leper, like snow.

### New Testament Reading: Philippians 1:1–20

#### Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

<sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Thanksgiving and Prayer

<sup>3</sup>I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup>always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, <sup>5</sup>because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup>And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will

bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup>For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup>And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup>so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup>filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

#### The Advance of the Gospel

<sup>12</sup>I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, <sup>13</sup>so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. <sup>14</sup>And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

<sup>15</sup>Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. <sup>16</sup>The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. <sup>17</sup>The former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. <sup>18</sup>What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

#### To Live Is Christ

Yes, and I will rejoice, <sup>19</sup>for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, <sup>20</sup>as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed,

but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

#### Writing

Come, my brethren, put on the Holy Spirit from the waters of Baptism; be joined with the angels who serve the Godhead! For He is the fire that seals His flock by His threefold name and puts the evil one to flight.

When John cried out and said, "This is the Lamb of God," he showed the Gentiles that they are also Abraham's children. He testified that our Savior would baptize with fire and the Spirit. The fire and the Spirit, my brothers, are in the Baptism of truth. For Baptism is greater than the little Jordan River, for in streams of water and oil, the misdeeds of all men are washed out. Elisha, by sevenfold washing, cleansed Naaman's leprosy; in Baptism, the secret misdeeds of the soul are cleansed. Moses baptized the people in the midst of the sea, yet he was unable to wash their hearts, which were defiled. [Jesus], the priest like Moses, purges the defilements of the soul, and with oil of anointing, He seals new lambs for the kingdom. Samuel anointed David to be king among the people, but [Jesus] anoints you to be heirs in the kingdom. For after his anointing, with armor, David fought and laid low the giant who sought to subdue Israel. Again, in the Baptism of Christ and in the armor that is from the water, the haughtiness of the evil one who sought to subdue the Gentiles is humbled. The thirst of the people was quenched in the water that flowed from rock. In the fountain of Christ, the thirst of the peoples is quenched. The rod of Moses opened the rock and the streams flowed

forth, and those who had grown faint with thirst were refreshed by its draught. From the side of Christ flowed the stream that bestowed life; the weary Gentiles drank and forgot their pains in it.

Sprinkle my vileness with Your dew, and my crimes shall be atoned in Your blood! And I shall be, O my Lord, at Your right hand and joined to Your saints!

—Ephraim Syrus

### Hymnody

Lord, You have raised me up  
To joy and exultation  
And clearly shown the way  
That leads me to salvation.  
My sins are washed away;  
For this I thank You, Lord.  
Now with my heart and soul  
All evil I abhor.

—How Can I Thank You, Lord  
(LSB 703:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, the giver of all good gifts, our thanksgiving overflows for the life You created in us and the new life we now have in You through Holy Baptism. Continue to shower us with Your gifts as we offer thanksgiving for our ongoing communion with You in Your body and blood; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1088)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 269–279 [390–400]

## 9 SEPTEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Hear my cry, | O God,\*  
listen | to my prayer;
- <sup>2</sup> from the end of the earth I call to you  
when my | heart is faint.\*  
Lead me to the rock  
that is high- | er than I,
- <sup>3</sup> for you have been my | refuge,\*  
a strong tower against the | enemy.
- <sup>4</sup> Let me dwell in your tent for- | ever!\*
- Let me take refuge  
under the shelter | of your wings!
- <sup>5</sup> For you, O God, have | heard my vows;\*  
you have given me the heritage  
of those who | fear your name.
- <sup>6</sup> Prolong the life | of the king;\*  
may his years endure  
to all gener- | ations!
- <sup>7</sup> May he be enthroned forever be- | fore God;\*  
appoint steadfast love and faithfulness  
to watch | over him!
- <sup>8</sup> So will I ever sing praises | to your name,\*  
as I perform my vows day | after day.  
—Psalm 61

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 59*

### Old Testament Reading: 2 Kings 6:1–23

The Axe Head Recovered

<sup>1</sup>Now the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “See, the place where we dwell under your charge is too small for us. <sup>2</sup>Let us go to the Jordan and each of us get there a log, and let us make a place for us to dwell there.” And he answered, “Go.” <sup>3</sup>Then one of them said, “Be pleased to go with your servants.” And he answered, “I will go.” <sup>4</sup>So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. <sup>5</sup>But as one

was felling a log, his axe head fell into the water, and he cried out, “Alas, my master! It was borrowed.”<sup>6</sup> Then the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw it in there and made the iron float.<sup>7</sup> And he said, “Take it up.” So he reached out his hand and took it.

Horses and Chariots of Fire

<sup>8</sup>Once when the king of Syria was warring against Israel, he took counsel with his servants, saying, “At such and such a place shall be my camp.”<sup>9</sup> But the man of God sent word to the king of Israel, “Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are going down there.”<sup>10</sup> And the king of Israel sent to the place about which the man of God told him. Thus he used to warn him, so that he saved himself there more than once or twice.

<sup>11</sup>And the mind of the king of Syria was greatly troubled because of this thing, and he called his servants and said to them, “Will you not show me who of us is for the king of Israel?”<sup>12</sup> And one of his servants said, “None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.”<sup>13</sup> And he said, “Go and see where he is, that I may send and seize him.” It was told him, “Behold, he is in Dothan.”<sup>14</sup> So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city.

<sup>15</sup>When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?”<sup>16</sup> He said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with

them.”<sup>17</sup> Then Elisha prayed and said, “O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see.” So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.<sup>18</sup> And when the Syrians came down against him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, “Please strike this people with blindness.” So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha.<sup>19</sup> And Elisha said to them, “This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek.” And he led them to Samaria.

<sup>20</sup>As soon as they entered Samaria, Elisha said, “O LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.” So the LORD opened their eyes and they saw, and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.<sup>21</sup> As soon as the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, “My father, shall I strike them down? Shall I strike them down?”<sup>22</sup> He answered, “You shall not strike them down. Would you strike down those whom you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.”<sup>23</sup> So he prepared for them a great feast, and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the Syrians did not come again on raids into the land of Israel.

*Additional Reading: 2 Kings 6:24–8:29*

### **New Testament Reading: Philippians 1:21–2:11**

[To Live Is Christ]

<sup>21</sup>For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.<sup>22</sup>If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose

I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup>I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. <sup>24</sup>But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. <sup>25</sup>Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup>so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

<sup>27</sup>Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup>and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. <sup>29</sup>For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, <sup>30</sup>engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

#### Christ's Example of Humility

<sup>21</sup>So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being

found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

#### Writing

[St. Peter said to Dante:]

“Say, thou good Christian;  
manifest thyself;

What is the Faith?”

Whereat I raised my brow

Unto that light wherefrom  
was this breathed forth.

Then turned I round to Beatrice, and she

Prompt signals made to me  
that I should pour

The water forth from my internal fountain.

“May grace, that suffers me  
to make confession,”

Began I, “to the great centurion,

Cause my conceptions all to be explicit!”

And I continued: “As the truthful pen,

Father, of thy dear brother  
wrote of it,

Who put with thee Rome into the good way,

Faith is the substance  
of the things we hope for,

And evidence of those  
that are not seen;

And this appears to me its quiddity  
[distinctive peculiarity].”

Then heard I:

“Very rightly thou perceivest,

If well thou understandest  
why he placed it

With substances and then with evidences.”

And I thereafterward:  
 “The things profound,  
     That here vouchsafe  
     to me their apparition,  
 Unto all eyes below are so concealed,  
     That they exist there only in belief,  
     Upon [that] is founded  
     the high hope,  
 And hence it takes the nature of a substance.  
     And it behoveth us from this belief  
     To reason without having  
     other sight,  
 And hence it has the nature of evidence.”  
     Then heard I: “If whatever is acquired  
     Below by doctrine were  
     thus understood,  
 No sophist’s subtlety would there find place.”  
 —Dante

### Hymnody

Lord, it belongs not to my care  
 Whether I die or live;  
 To love and serve Thee is my share,  
 And this Thy grace must give.  
     —Lord, It Belongs Not to My Care  
     (*LSB* 757:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Merciful Lord, You sent Your Son,  
 Jesus, into our world to humble Himself by  
 becoming obedient unto death, even death  
 on a cross. Teach us to be obedient so that we  
 might declare with St. Paul that “for to me to  
 live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians  
 1:21) and so that our lives may be worthy of  
 the Gospel of Christ; through Jesus Christ,  
 our Lord. (1089)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 VII–VIII (IV) 1–15

## 10 SEPTEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Do you indeed decree  
 what is | right, you gods?\*
- Do you judge the children  
 of man up- | rightly?
- <sup>2</sup> No, in your hearts you de- | vise wrongs;\*
- your hands deal out violence | on earth.
- <sup>3</sup> The wicked are estranged | from the womb;\*
- they go astray from birth, | speaking lies.
- <sup>4</sup> They have venom like the venom  
 of a | serpent,\*
- like the deaf adder that | stops its ear,  
<sup>5</sup> so that it does not hear the voice  
 of | charmers\*  
 or of the cunning en- | chanter.
- <sup>6</sup> O God, break the teeth | in their mouths;\*
- tear out the fangs of  
 the young lions, | O LORD!
- <sup>7</sup> Let them vanish like water  
 that | runs away;\*
- when he aims his arrows,  
 let them be | blunted.
- <sup>8</sup> Let them be like the snail that  
 dissolves | into slime,\*  
 like the stillborn child who  
 never | sees the sun.  
 —Psalm 58:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 53*

**Old Testament Reading:  
2 Kings 9:1–13; 10:18–29**

Jehu Anointed King of Israel

<sup>1</sup>Then Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, “Tie up your garments, and take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead. <sup>2</sup>And when you arrive, look there for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi. And go in and have him rise from among his fellows, and lead him to an inner chamber. <sup>3</sup>Then take the flask of oil and pour it on his head and say, ‘Thus says the LORD, I anoint you king over Israel.’ Then open the door and flee; do not linger.”

<sup>4</sup>So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead. <sup>5</sup>And when he came, behold, the commanders of the army were in council. And he said, “I have a word for you, O commander.” And Jehu said, “To which of us all?” And he said, “To you, O commander.” <sup>6</sup>So he arose and went into the house. And the young man poured the oil on his head, saying to him, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, I anoint you king over the people of the LORD, over Israel. <sup>7</sup>And you shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, so that I may avenge on Jezebel the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD. <sup>8</sup>For the whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel. <sup>9</sup>And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. <sup>10</sup>And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury her.” Then he opened the door and fled.

<sup>11</sup>When Jehu came out to the servants of his master, they said to him, “Is all well? Why did this mad fellow come to you?” And

he said to them, “You know the fellow and his talk.” <sup>12</sup>And they said, “That is not true; tell us now.” And he said, “Thus and so he spoke to me, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD, I anoint you king over Israel.’” <sup>13</sup>Then in haste every man of them took his garment and put it under him on the bare steps, and they blew the trumpet and proclaimed, “Jehu is king.” . . .

Jehu Strikes Down the Prophets of Baal

<sup>18</sup>Then Jehu assembled all the people and said to them, “Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu will serve him much. <sup>19</sup>Now therefore call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his worshipers and all his priests. Let none be missing, for I have a great sacrifice to offer to Baal. Whoever is missing shall not live.” But Jehu did it with cunning in order to destroy the worshipers of Baal. <sup>20</sup>And Jehu ordered, “Sanctify a solemn assembly for Baal.” So they proclaimed it. <sup>21</sup>And Jehu sent throughout all Israel, and all the worshipers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. And they entered the house of Baal, and the house of Baal was filled from one end to the other. <sup>22</sup>He said to him who was in charge of the wardrobe, “Bring out the vestments for all the worshipers of Baal.” So he brought out the vestments for them. <sup>23</sup>Then Jehu went into the house of Baal with Jehonadab the son of Rechab, and he said to the worshipers of Baal, “Search, and see that there is no servant of the LORD here among you, but only the worshipers of Baal.” <sup>24</sup>Then they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings.

Now Jehu had stationed eighty men outside and said, “The man who allows any of those whom I give into your hands to escape shall forfeit his life.” <sup>25</sup>So as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt

offering, Jehu said to the guard and to the officers, “Go in and strike them down; let not a man escape.” So when they put them to the sword, the guard and the officers cast them out and went into the inner room of the house of Baal, <sup>26</sup>and they brought out the pillar that was in the house of Baal and burned it. <sup>27</sup>And they demolished the pillar of Baal, and demolished the house of Baal, and made it a latrine to this day.

Jehu Reigns in Israel

<sup>28</sup>Thus Jehu wiped out Baal from Israel. <sup>29</sup>But Jehu did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin—that is, the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan.

*Additional Reading: 2 Kings 13:1–18:8*

### New Testament Reading: Philippians 2:12–30

Lights in the World

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

<sup>14</sup>Do all things without grumbling or questioning, <sup>15</sup>that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup>holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. <sup>17</sup>Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you

all. <sup>18</sup>Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Timothy and Epaphroditus

<sup>19</sup>I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. <sup>20</sup>For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. <sup>21</sup>For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. <sup>22</sup>But you know Timothy’s proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. <sup>23</sup>I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, <sup>24</sup>and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

<sup>25</sup>I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, <sup>26</sup>for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. <sup>27</sup>Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. <sup>28</sup>I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. <sup>29</sup>So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, <sup>30</sup>for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

### Writing

Therefore, ordinances instituted as though they are necessary, or with the view that they merit grace, are contrary to the Gospel. Therefore, it follows that it is not lawful for any bishop to institute and require such services. It is necessary that the doctrine of Christian freedom be preserved

in the churches. In other words, the bondage of the Law is not necessary in order to be justified, as it is written in the Epistle to the Galatians, “do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (5:1). It is necessary for the chief article of the Gospel to be preserved, namely that we obtain grace freely by faith in Christ, and not by certain observances or acts of worship devised by people.

What, then, are we to think of the Sunday rites, and similar things, in God’s house? We answer that it is lawful for bishops, or pastors, to make ordinances so that things will be done orderly in the Church, but not to teach that we merit grace or make satisfaction for sins. Consciences are not bound to regard them as necessary services and to think that it is a sin to break them without offense to others. So in 1 Corinthians 11:5, Paul concludes that women should cover their heads in the congregation and in 1 Corinthians 14:30, that interpreters be heard in order in the church, and so on.

It is proper that the churches keep such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquility, to avoid giving offense to another, so that all things be done in the churches in order, and without confusion (1 Corinthians 14:40; comp. Philippians 2:14). It is proper to keep such ordinances just so long as consciences are not burdened to think that they are necessary to salvation, or to regard it as sin if they are changed without offending others. For instance, no one will say that a woman sins who goes out in public with her head uncovered, as long as no offense is given.

—Augsburg Confession XXVIII 50–56

## Hymnody

For me to live is Jesus,  
To die is gain for me;  
So when my Savior pleases,  
I meet death willingly.

—For Me to Live Is Jesus (*LSB* 742:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, light of the world, You shine with the brightness of the sun in the darkness of our crooked and twisted generation. Give us strength to shine as lights in the world as we live out our baptismal life by serving our neighbors with thanksgiving and joy as sacrificial offerings of mercy and love; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1090)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession VII–VIII (IV) 16–24

## 11 SEPTEMBER

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> O God, we have heard with our ears,  
our fathers have | told us,\*  
what deeds you performed in their days,  
in the | days of old:

<sup>2</sup> you with your own hand drove out the  
nations, but them you | planted;\*  
you afflicted the peoples,  
but them you | set free;

<sup>3</sup> for not by their own sword did they win the  
land, nor did their own arm | save them,\*

but your right hand and your arm,  
and the light of your face,  
for you de- | lighted in them.

<sup>4</sup>You are my King, | O God;\*  
ordain salvation for | Jacob!

<sup>5</sup>Through you we push | down our foes;\*  
through your name we tread down  
those who rise up a- | gainst us.

<sup>6</sup>For not in my bow | do I trust,\*  
nor can my sword | save me.

<sup>7</sup>But you have saved us | from our foes\*  
and have put to shame  
those who | hate us.

<sup>8</sup>In God we have boasted con- | tinually,\*  
and we will give thanks to your name  
for- | ever.

—Psalm 44:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 100*

## Old Testament Reading:

### 2 Chronicles 29:1–24

Hezekiah Reigns in Judah

<sup>1</sup>Hezekiah began to reign when he was twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abijah the daughter of Zechariah. <sup>2</sup>And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.

Hezekiah Cleanses the Temple

<sup>3</sup>In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. <sup>4</sup>He brought in the priests and the Levites and assembled them in the square on the east <sup>5</sup>and said to them, "Hear me, Levites! Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of the LORD, the God of your fathers, and carry out the filth from the Holy Place. <sup>6</sup>For our fathers have been unfaithful and have done what was

evil in the sight of the LORD our God. They have forsaken him and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD and turned their backs. <sup>7</sup>They also shut the doors of the vestibule and put out the lamps and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the Holy Place to the God of Israel. <sup>8</sup>Therefore the wrath of the LORD came on Judah and Jerusalem, and he has made them an object of horror, of astonishment, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes. <sup>9</sup>For behold, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. <sup>10</sup>Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, in order that his fierce anger may turn away from us. <sup>11</sup>My sons, do not now be negligent, for the LORD has chosen you to stand in his presence, to minister to him and to be his ministers and make offerings to him."

<sup>12</sup>Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites; and of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehallelel; and of the Gershonites, Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah; <sup>13</sup>and of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeuel; and of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah; <sup>14</sup>and of the sons of Heman, Jehuel and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel. <sup>15</sup>They gathered their brothers and consecrated themselves and went in as the king had commanded, by the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD. <sup>16</sup>The priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse it, and they brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the Lord. And the Levites took

it and carried it out to the brook Kidron.

<sup>17</sup>They began to consecrate on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the vestibule of the LORD. Then for eight days they consecrated the house of the LORD, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished. <sup>18</sup>Then they went in to Hezekiah the king and said, “We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the table for the showbread and all its utensils. <sup>19</sup>All the utensils that King Ahaz discarded in his reign when he was faithless, we have made ready and consecrated, and behold, they are before the altar of the LORD.”

Hezekiah Restores Temple Worship

<sup>20</sup>Then Hezekiah the king rose early and gathered the officials of the city and went up to the house of the LORD. <sup>21</sup>And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom and for the sanctuary and for Judah. And he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the LORD. <sup>22</sup>So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests received the blood and threw it against the altar. And they slaughtered the rams, and their blood was thrown against the altar. And they slaughtered the lambs, and their blood was thrown against the altar. <sup>23</sup>Then the goats for the sin offering were brought to the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them, <sup>24</sup>and the priests slaughtered them and made a sin offering with their blood on the altar, to make atonement for all Israel. For the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel.

## New Testament Reading: Philippians 3:1–21

Righteousness Through Faith in Christ

<sup>1</sup>Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

<sup>2</sup>Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <sup>3</sup>For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—<sup>4</sup>though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup>But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup>Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—<sup>10</sup>that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Straining Toward the Goal

<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup>Brothers, I do not consider that

I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. <sup>16</sup>Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

<sup>17</sup>Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. <sup>18</sup>For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup>Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup>But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup>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.

## Writing

In conclusion the psalmist states that despite the insignificance of the clouds and God's Christians to the world they are nonetheless a wonder to behold in view of God's immanence in them and His rule over them. Everyone, therefore, really ought to stand in awe of them and honor them, since they form God's holy dwelling place. For the word "saints" refers to a holy place and dwelling here. The holy Christians make up the holy dwelling place of God in the New Testament, where God is no longer confined to cities and buildings as He was in the Old Testament. These Christians are sanctified far more perfectly than Solomon's temple, sanctified with the Holy Spirit Himself, and anointed with the living oil of God's grace.

Whoever touches them also touches the apple of God's eye (Zech. 2:8). This assurance is given us to console and fortify us in the days of persecution. Whatever persecution is visited on us, whom they despise, is really inflicted on God, who will deal terribly with them.

The appellation "the God of Israel" signifies that our God is none other than the one whom the Israelites once had. It is Christ, whom the Israelites once possessed and of whom we now also say: He who does these things is no longer only Israel's God but the God of the whole world. Nobody is strong in his own might; no one has the strength for successful resistance to evil. It is God alone who vouchsafes power and strength to all, namely, to all who are powerful and strong, so that He alone is blessed and He alone is God. That is the meaning of "Blessed be God!" Or, as St. Paul says (2 Cor. 10:17): "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord!" Amen.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

—When I Survey the Wondrous Cross  
(LSB 425:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Most merciful Father, with compassion You hear the cries of Your people in great distress. Be with all who now endure affliction and calamity, bless the work of those who bring rescue and relief, and enable us to aid and comfort those who are suffering that they may find renewed hope

and purpose; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F41)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
VII–VIII (IV) 25–35

## 12 SEPTEMBER

### Psalmody

<sup>12</sup> Blessèd is the man whom you  
discipline, | O LORD,\*  
and whom you teach out | of your law,  
<sup>13</sup> to give him rest from days of | trouble,\*  
until a pit is dug for the | wicked.  
<sup>14</sup> For the LORD will not forsake his | people;\*  
he will not abandon his | heritage;  
<sup>15</sup> for justice will return to the | righteous,\*  
and all the upright in heart  
will | follow it.  
—Psalm 94:12–15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 94*

### Old Testament Reading: 2 Chronicles 31:1–21

Hezekiah Organizes the Priests

<sup>1</sup>Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke in pieces the pillars and cut down the Asherim and broke down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, and in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the people of Israel returned to their cities, every man to his possession.

<sup>2</sup>And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and of the Levites, division by division, each according to his service, the priests and the Levites, for burnt offerings and peace offerings, to minister in the gates of the camp of the Lord and to give thanks and praise. <sup>3</sup>The contribution of the king from his own possessions was for the burnt offerings: the burnt offerings of morning and evening, and the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths, the new moons, and the appointed feasts, as it is written in the Law of the LORD. <sup>4</sup>And he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, that they might give themselves to the Law of the LORD. <sup>5</sup>As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the firstfruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field. And they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. <sup>6</sup>And the people of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah also brought in the tithe of cattle and sheep, and the tithe of the dedicated things that had been dedicated to the LORD their God, and laid them in heaps. <sup>7</sup>In the third month they began to pile up the heaps, and finished them in the seventh month. <sup>8</sup>When Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and his people Israel. <sup>9</sup>And Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites about the heaps. <sup>10</sup>Azariah the chief priest, who was of the house of Zadok, answered him, “Since they began to bring the contributions into the house of the LORD, we have eaten and had enough and have plenty left, for the LORD has blessed his people, so that we have this large amount left.” <sup>11</sup>Then Hezekiah commanded them to prepare chambers in the house of the

LORD, and they prepared them. <sup>12</sup>And they faithfully brought in the contributions, the tithes, and the dedicated things. The chief officer in charge of them was Conaniah the Levite, with Shimei his brother as second, <sup>13</sup>while Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah were overseers assisting Conaniah and Shimei his brother, by the appointment of Hezekiah the king and Azariah the chief officer of the house of God. <sup>14</sup>And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the east gate, was over the freewill offerings to God, to apportion the contribution reserved for the Lord and the most holy offerings. <sup>15</sup>Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah were faithfully assisting him in the cities of the priests, to distribute the portions to their brothers, old and young alike, by divisions, <sup>16</sup>except those enrolled by genealogy, males from three years old and upward—all who entered the house of the LORD as the duty of each day required—for their service according to their offices, by their divisions. <sup>17</sup>The enrollment of the priests was according to their fathers' houses; that of the Levites from twenty years old and upward was according to their offices, by their divisions. <sup>18</sup>They were enrolled with all their little children, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, the whole assembly, for they were faithful in keeping themselves holy. <sup>19</sup>And for the sons of Aaron, the priests, who were in the fields of common land belonging to their cities, there were men in the several cities who were designated by name to distribute portions to every male among the priests and to everyone among the Levites who was enrolled.

<sup>20</sup>Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his God. <sup>21</sup>And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered.

### **New Testament Reading: Philippians 4:1–23**

[Straining Toward the Goal]

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

Exhortation, Encouragement, and Prayer

<sup>2</sup>I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. <sup>3</sup>Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

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

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

God's Provision

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

<sup>14</sup>Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. <sup>15</sup>And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. <sup>16</sup>Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. <sup>17</sup>Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. <sup>18</sup>I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup>And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup>To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

<sup>21</sup>Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. <sup>22</sup>All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

<sup>23</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Writing

“Be cognizant, for the kingdom of God is near” (Luke 21:31).

These words can refer either to the kingdom of God that we call the “advent of the Son,” for whose nativity we should be preparing just now, or to the kingdom of God we say is “paradise.” Either interpretation is truly and strictly acceptable, for the kingdom of glory is near to the servants of God, and the kingdom of grace, the advent of Christ, is already among them (Luke 17:21) and day by day grows and multiplies in His own servants.

Thus, whichever way we interpret “kingdom of God,” we can say that this kingdom is a place or a reality of supreme majesty and therefore seeks out those of noble and reverential desires, for we read: “Surely His salvation is near those who fear Him, that His glory may dwell in our land” (Psalm 85:9). This kingdom has supreme clarity and therefore is among men of outstanding contemplation and meditation, inasmuch as “You are near, O Lord, and all Your ways are truth” (Psalm 119:151). This kingdom is incomparably charming and gentle, so that those who are near it, who have been created anew and anointed from heaven, exclaim: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near” (Philippians 4:4–5). The kingdom is, lastly, supremely holy and therefore encourages believers to be in regular conversation with God, for “the Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth” (Psalm 145:18).

—Bonaventure

## Hymnody

Only Jesus can impart  
 Balm to heal the wounded heart,  
 Peace that flows from sin forgiv'n,  
 Joy that lifts the soul to heav'n,  
 Faith and hope to walk with God  
 In the way that Enoch trod.  
 —Chief of Sinners Though I Be  
 (LSB 611:3)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You have prepared for those who love You good things that surpass all understanding. Pour into our hearts such love toward You that we, loving You above all things, may obtain Your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H65)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 VII–VIII (IV) 36–50

## 13 SEPTEMBER

## Psalmody

<sup>7</sup>Hear, O LORD, when I | cry aloud;\*  
 be gracious to me and | answer me!  
<sup>8</sup>You have said, | “Seek my face.”\*  
 My heart says to you,  
 “Your face, LORD, | do I seek.”  
<sup>9</sup>Hide not your face from me. Turn not  
 your servant away in | anger,\*  
 O you who have been my help.  
 Cast me not off; forsake me not,  
 O God of my sal- | vation!

<sup>10</sup>For my father and my mother have  
 for- | saken me,\*  
 but the LORD will | take me in.  
<sup>11</sup>Teach me your way, | O LORD,\*  
 and lead me on a level path because  
 of my | enemies.  
<sup>12</sup>Give me not up to the will  
 of my adver- | saries;\*  
 for false witnesses have risen against me,  
 and they breathe out | violence.  
<sup>13</sup>I believe that I shall look upon the  
 goodness | of the LORD\*  
 in the land of the | living!  
 —Psalm 27:7–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 31*

## Old Testament Reading: 2 Chronicles 32:1–22

Sennacherib Invades Judah

<sup>1</sup>After these things and these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them for himself. <sup>2</sup>And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem, <sup>3</sup>he planned with his officers and his mighty men to stop the water of the springs that were outside the city; and they helped him. <sup>4</sup>A great many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs and the brook that flowed through the land, saying, “Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?” <sup>5</sup>He set to work resolutely and built up all the wall that was broken down and raised towers upon it, and outside it he built another wall, and he strengthened the Millo in the city of David. He also made weapons and shields in abundance. <sup>6</sup>And he set combat commanders over the people and gathered them together

to him in the square at the gate of the city and spoke encouragingly to them, saying, <sup>7</sup>“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him, for there are more with us than with him. <sup>8</sup>With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles.” And the people took confidence from the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

#### Sennacherib Blasphemes

<sup>9</sup>After this, Sennacherib king of Assyria, who was besieging Lachish with all his forces, sent his servants to Jerusalem to Hezekiah king of Judah and to all the people of Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying, <sup>10</sup>“Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria, ‘On what are you trusting, that you endure the siege in Jerusalem? <sup>11</sup>Is not Hezekiah misleading you, that he may give you over to die by famine and by thirst, when he tells you, “The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria?” <sup>12</sup>Has not this same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, “Before one altar you shall worship, and on it you shall burn your sacrifices?” <sup>13</sup>Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands at all able to deliver their lands out of my hand? <sup>14</sup>Who among all the gods of those nations that my fathers devoted to destruction was able to deliver his people from my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand? <sup>15</sup>Now, therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you in this fashion, and do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people

from my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you out of my hand!”

<sup>16</sup>And his servants said still more against the Lord GOD and against his servant Hezekiah. <sup>17</sup>And he wrote letters to cast contempt on the LORD, the God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, “Like the gods of the nations of the lands who have not delivered their people from my hands, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver his people from my hand.” <sup>18</sup>And they shouted it with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten and terrify them, in order that they might take the city. <sup>19</sup>And they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as they spoke of the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the work of men’s hands.

#### The Lord Delivers Jerusalem

<sup>20</sup>Then Hezekiah the king and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed because of this and cried to heaven. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he came into the house of his god, some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword. <sup>22</sup>So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of all his enemies, and he provided for them on every side.

*Additional Reading: Hosea 1:1–14:9*

## New Testament Reading: Colossians 1:1–23

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

<sup>2</sup>To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

### Thanksgiving and Prayer

<sup>3</sup>We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup>since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup>because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup>which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, <sup>7</sup>just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf <sup>8</sup>and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

<sup>9</sup>And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup>so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. <sup>11</sup>May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, <sup>12</sup>giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. <sup>13</sup>He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his

beloved Son, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

### The Preeminence of Christ

<sup>15</sup>He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup>For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup>For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

<sup>21</sup>And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup>he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, <sup>23</sup>if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

### Writing

Thus Paul concludes that he who grasps and clings to this Head, that is, to this individual human nature which in Colossians 1 he calls the body, flesh, and blood of Christ, at the same time grasps, holds, and possesses the whole fullness of the Godhead. For this fullness dwells in the assumed nature, which is akin to us, of the same substance with us, and personally

united with us, because there and in that way He has willed that He be sought, found, apprehended, and possessed. For in His absolute deity we cannot approach Him, since we have been alienated and barred from Him because of our sin. But now, since this fullness has been made akin to us in the flesh, not indeed through a transformation or conversion of the natures and essences but through the personal union, we are permitted to approach Him. And since we have an approach and access to the assumed nature of Christ on account of our consubstantial relationship through faith, we also through this same means have an approach to the whole fullness of the deity of the Logos, which dwells in the assumed nature; and thus we are finally brought to fellowship not only with the Son but also with the Father and the Holy Spirit because of the consubstantiality (*ὁμοουσία*) of the Trinity. These matters can be explained and illustrated by many statements in Colossians 1 and 2, but because we are not writing a commentary, a brief mention will suffice. And since this is nothing else than what we are teaching in our churches concerning the communication of the majesty, it is clear how beautifully the doctrine is explained and confirmed in Paul's statement regarding the whole fullness of the Godhead, which dwells bodily in Christ, so that thus we, His members, may be filled through the working and supplying from Him as the Head, as Paul describes it.

—Martin Chemnitz

## Hymnody

It is Your work alone  
That I am now converted;  
O'er Satan's work in me  
You have Your pow'r asserted.  
Your mercy and Your grace  
That rise afresh each morn  
Have turned my stony heart  
Into a heart newborn.

—How Can I Thank You, Lord  
(*LSB* 703:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of Your faithful people that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by You be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H84)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
IX (51–53), X (54–57), XI 58–59

## 14 SEPTEMBER

*Holy Cross Day*

## Psalmody

<sup>6</sup> I am utterly bowed down and | prostrate;\*  
all the day I go about | mourning.

<sup>7</sup> For my sides are filled with | burning,\*  
and there is no soundness | in my flesh.

<sup>8</sup> I am feeble | and crushed;\*  
I groan because of the tumult | of my heart.

- <sup>9</sup> O Lord, all my longing is be- | fore you,\*  
my sighing is not hid- | den from you.
- <sup>10</sup> My heart throbs; my strength | fails me,\*  
and the light of my eyes—it also  
has | gone from me.
- <sup>11</sup> My friends and companions stand  
aloof | from my plague,\*  
and my nearest kin stand | far off.
- <sup>12</sup> Those who seek my life lay their snares;  
those who seek my hurt speak of | ruin\*  
and meditate treachery | all day long.
- <sup>13</sup> But I am like a deaf man; I | do not hear,\*  
like a mute man who does not o- | pen  
his mouth.
- <sup>14</sup> I have become like a man who | does  
not hear,\*  
and in whose mouth are | no rebukes.
- <sup>15</sup> But for you, O LORD, | do I wait;\*  
it is you, O Lord my God,  
who will | answer.
- <sup>16</sup> For I said, “Only let them not rejoice | over  
me,\*  
who boast against me when my | foot  
slips!”  
—Psalm 38:6–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 38*

## Old Testament Reading: 2 Chronicles 33:1–25

Manasseh Reigns in Judah

<sup>1</sup>Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. <sup>3</sup>For he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had broken down, and he erected altars to the Baals, and made Asherahs, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served

them. <sup>4</sup>And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, “In Jerusalem shall my name be forever.” <sup>5</sup>And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>And he burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. <sup>7</sup>And the carved image of the idol that he had made he set in the house of God, of which God said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever, <sup>8</sup>and I will no more remove the foot of Israel from the land that I appointed for your fathers, if only they will be careful to do all that I have commanded them, all the law, the statutes, and the rules given through Moses.” <sup>9</sup>Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel.

Manasseh’s Repentance

<sup>10</sup>The LORD spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they paid no attention. <sup>11</sup>Therefore the LORD brought upon them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria, who captured Manasseh with hooks and bound him with chains of bronze and brought him to Babylon. <sup>12</sup>And when he was in distress, he entreated the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. <sup>13</sup>He prayed to him, and God was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

<sup>14</sup>Afterward he built an outer wall for the city of David west of Gihon, in the valley, and for the entrance into the Fish Gate, and carried it around Ophel, and raised it to a very great height. He also put commanders of the army in all the fortified cities in Judah. <sup>15</sup>And he took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built on the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and he threw them outside of the city. <sup>16</sup>He also restored the altar of the LORD and offered on it sacrifices of peace offerings and of thanksgiving, and he commanded Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel. <sup>17</sup>Nevertheless, the people still sacrificed at the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

<sup>18</sup>Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, behold, they are in the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. <sup>19</sup>And his prayer, and how God was moved by his entreaty, and all his sin and his faithlessness, and the sites on which he built high places and set up the Asherim and the images, before he humbled himself, behold, they are written in the Chronicles of the Seers. <sup>20</sup>So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his house, and Amon his son reigned in his place.

#### Amon's Reign and Death

<sup>21</sup>Amon was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as Manasseh his father had done. Amon sacrificed to all the images that Manasseh his father had made, and served them. <sup>23</sup>And he did not humble

himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself, but this Amon incurred guilt more and more. <sup>24</sup>And his servants conspired against him and put him to death in his house. <sup>25</sup>But the people of the land struck down all those who had conspired against King Amon. And the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place.

*Additional Reading: Jonah 1:1–4:11*

#### New Testament Reading: Colossians 1:24–2:7

##### Paul's Ministry to the Church

<sup>24</sup>Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, <sup>25</sup>of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, <sup>26</sup>the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. <sup>27</sup>To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup>Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup>For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

<sup>2:1</sup>For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, <sup>2</sup>that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, <sup>3</sup>in whom

are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup>I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. <sup>5</sup>For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

Alive in Christ

<sup>6</sup>Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

## Writing

The children of Israel, whenever they turned to repentance, remembered above all their exodus from Egypt, and remembering turned back to God who had brought them out. Moses impressed this memory and this protection upon them many times, and David afterwards did the same. How much more ought we to remember our exodus from Egypt, and by this remembrance turn back to him who led us through the washing of regeneration [Titus 3:5], remembrance of which is commended to us for this very reason! This can be done most fittingly in the sacrament of bread and wine. . . . Thus you see how rich a Christian is, that is, one who has been baptized! Even if he would, he could not lose his salvation, however much he sinned, unless he refused to believe. For no sin can condemn him save unbelief alone. All other sins, so long as the faith in God's promise made in baptism returns or remains, are immediately blotted out through that same faith, or rather through the truth of God, because he cannot deny himself if you confess him and faithfully cling to him in his promise.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Once far off but now invited,  
We approach Your sacred throne,  
In Your covenant united,  
Reconciled, redeemed, made one.  
Now revealed to eastern sages,  
See the Star of Mercy shine,  
Myst'ry hid in former ages,  
Myst'ry great of love divine.

—Hail, O Source of Every Blessing  
(LSB 409:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful God, Your Son, Jesus Christ, was lifted high upon the cross that He might bear the sins of the world and draw all people to Himself. Grant that we who glory in His death for our redemption may faithfully heed His call to bear the cross and follow Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F27)

## Holy Cross

One of the earliest annual celebrations of the Church, Holy Cross Day traditionally commemorated the discovery of the original cross of Jesus on September 14, 320, in Jerusalem. The cross was found by Helena, mother of Roman Emperor Constantine the Great. The festival day was made official in conjunction with the dedication of a basilica by order of Constantine in AD 335 at the site of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. A devout Christian, Helena had helped locate and authenticate many sites related to the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus throughout biblical lands. Holy Cross Day has remained popular in both Eastern and Western Christianity. Many Lutheran

parishes have chosen to use “Holy Cross” as the name of their congregation.

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XI 60–67

**15 SEPTEMBER**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> Blessèd is the man who walks not  
 in the counsel of the | wicked,\*  
 nor stands in the way of sinners,  
 nor sits in the seat of | scoffers;
- <sup>2</sup> but his delight is in the law | of the LORD,\*  
 and on his law he meditates | day  
 and night.
- <sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams  
 of water that yields its fruit in its season,  
 and its leaf does not | wither.\*  
 In all that he does, he | prospers.
- <sup>4</sup> The wicked | are not so,\*  
 but are like chaff that the wind | drives  
 away.
- <sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand  
 in the | judgment,\*  
 nor sinners in the congregation  
 of the | righteous;
- <sup>6</sup> for the LORD knows the way  
 of the | righteous,\*  
 but the way of the wicked will | perish.  
 —Psalm 1

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 4*

**Old Testament Reading:  
 2 Chronicles 34:1–4, 8–11, 14–33**

Josiah Reigns in Judah

<sup>1</sup>Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. <sup>3</sup>For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images. <sup>4</sup>And they chopped down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and he cut down the incense altars that stood above them. And he broke in pieces the Asherim and the carved and the metal images, and he made dust of them and scattered it over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. . . .

The Book of the Law Found

<sup>8</sup>Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had cleansed the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. <sup>9</sup>They came to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the money that had been brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the keepers of the threshold, had collected from Manasseh and Ephraim and from all the remnant of Israel and from all Judah and Benjamin and from the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>And they gave it to the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD. And the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD gave it for repairing and restoring the house.

<sup>11</sup>They gave it to the carpenters and the builders to buy quarried stone, and timber for binders and beams for the buildings that the kings of Judah had let go to ruin. . . .

<sup>14</sup>While they were bringing out the money that had been brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given through Moses. <sup>15</sup>Then Hilkiyah answered and said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan. <sup>16</sup>Shaphan brought the book to the king, and further reported to the king, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing. <sup>17</sup>They have emptied out the money that was found in the house of the LORD and have given it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen." <sup>18</sup>Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read from it before the king.

<sup>19</sup>And when the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes. <sup>20</sup>And the king commanded Hilkiyah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, <sup>21</sup>"Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book."

#### Huldah Prophecies Disaster

<sup>22</sup>So Hilkiyah and those whom the king had sent went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter)

and spoke to her to that effect. <sup>23</sup>And she said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Tell the man who sent you to me, <sup>24</sup>Thus says the LORD, Behold, I will bring disaster upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book that was read before the king of Judah. <sup>25</sup>Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands, therefore my wrath will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched. <sup>26</sup>But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, <sup>27</sup>because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD. <sup>28</sup>Behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place and its inhabitants.' " And they brought back word to the king.

<sup>29</sup>Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>30</sup>And the king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites, all the people both great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD. <sup>31</sup>And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his

heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. <sup>32</sup>Then he made all who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin join in it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. <sup>33</sup>And Josiah took away all the abominations from all the territory that belonged to the people of Israel and made all who were present in Israel serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not turn away from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

*Additional Reading: Nahum 1:1–3:19*

**New Testament Reading:  
Colossians 2:8–23**

[Alive in Christ]

<sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup>and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. <sup>11</sup>In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup>having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup>by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Let No One Disqualify You

<sup>16</sup>Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. <sup>17</sup>These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. <sup>18</sup>Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, <sup>19</sup>and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

<sup>20</sup>If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—<sup>21</sup>“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” <sup>22</sup>(referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? <sup>23</sup>These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

**Writing**

This is what we hold and teach, in conformity with the ancient orthodox Church, as it has explained this teaching from the Scriptures: the human nature in Christ has received this majesty through the personal union. This happened because the entire fullness of the divinity dwells in Christ [Colossians 2:9], not as in other holy men or angels, but bodily, as in its own body. The divinity shines forth with all its majesty, power, glory, and effectiveness in the received human nature. It does this voluntarily when and as Christ wills. In, with, and through the human nature, Christ shows, uses, and acts

on His divine power, glory, and efficacy, as the soul does in the body and fire in glowing iron. (By means of these illustrations, as was also mentioned above, the entire Ancient Church has explained this doctrine.) This power was concealed and withheld at the time of the humiliation. But now, after the form of a servant has been laid aside, it is fully, powerfully, and publicly exercised before all saints, in heaven and on earth. In the life to come we shall also behold His glory face-to-face (John 17:24).

There is and remains in Christ only one divine omnipotence, power, majesty, and glory, which is peculiar to the divine nature alone. But it shines, manifests, and exercises itself fully—yet voluntarily—in, with, and through the received, exalted human nature in Christ.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 64–66

### Hymnody

All who believe and are baptized  
Shall see the Lord's salvation;  
Baptized into the death of Christ,  
They are a new creation.  
Through Christ's redemption they shall stand  
Among the glorious, heav'nly band  
Of ev'ry tribe and nation.

—All Who Believe and Are Baptized  
(LSB 601:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, because without You we are not able to please You, mercifully grant that Your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H78)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIa (V) 1–10

## 16 SEPTEMBER

*Cyprian of Carthage, Pastor and Martyr*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> My heart is steadfast, | O God!\*  
I will sing and make melody  
with all my | being!

<sup>2</sup> Awake, O | harp and lyre!\*  
I will a- | wake the dawn!

<sup>3</sup> I will give thanks to you, O LORD,  
among the | peoples;\*  
I will sing praises to you  
among the | nations.

<sup>4</sup> For your steadfast love is great above  
the | heavens;\*  
your faithfulness reaches | to the clouds.

<sup>5</sup> Be exalted, O God, above the | heavens!\*  
Let your glory be over | all the earth!

<sup>6</sup> That your beloved ones may be  
de- | livered,\*  
give salvation by your right hand  
and | answer me!

—Psalm 108:1–6

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 108*

### Old Testament Reading: 2 Chronicles 35:1–7, 16–25

Josiah Keeps the Passover

<sup>1</sup>Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem. And they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. <sup>2</sup>He appointed the priests to

their offices and encouraged them in the service of the house of the LORD. <sup>3</sup>And he said to the Levites who taught all Israel and who were holy to the LORD, “Put the holy ark in the house that Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. You need not carry it on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and his people Israel. <sup>4</sup>Prepare yourselves according to your fathers’ houses by your divisions, as prescribed in the writing of David king of Israel and the document of Solomon his son. <sup>5</sup>And stand in the Holy Place according to the groupings of the fathers’ houses of your brothers the lay people, and according to the division of the Levites by fathers’ household. <sup>6</sup>And slaughter the Passover lamb, and consecrate yourselves, and prepare for your brothers, to do according to the word of the LORD by Moses.”

<sup>7</sup>Then Josiah contributed to the lay people, as Passover offerings for all who were present, lambs and young goats from the flock to the number of 30,000, and 3,000 bulls; these were from the king’s possessions. . . .

<sup>16</sup>So all the service of the LORD was prepared that day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah. <sup>17</sup>And the people of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days. <sup>18</sup>No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>19</sup>In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept.

#### Josiah Killed in Battle

<sup>20</sup>After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to meet him. <sup>21</sup>But he sent envoys to him, saying, “What have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you.”

<sup>22</sup>Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to fight in the plain of Megiddo. <sup>23</sup>And the archers shot King Josiah. And the king said to his servants, “Take me away, for I am badly wounded.” <sup>24</sup>So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. And he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. <sup>25</sup>Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josiah in their laments to this day. They made these a rule in Israel; behold, they are written in the Laments.

*Additional Reading: Zephaniah 1:1–3:20*

#### **New Testament Reading: Colossians 3:1–25**

##### Put On the New Self

<sup>1</sup>If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup>For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

<sup>4</sup>When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

<sup>5</sup>Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>On account of these the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup>In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. <sup>8</sup>But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup>Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

<sup>12</sup>Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup>bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup>And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Rules for Christian Households

<sup>18</sup>Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup>Husbands, love your

wives, and do not be harsh with them.

<sup>20</sup>Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. <sup>22</sup>Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

<sup>23</sup>Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, <sup>24</sup>knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup>For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

## Writing

Vices and carnal sins must be trampled down, beloved brothers, and the corrupting plague of the earthly body must be trodden underfoot with spiritual vigor, lest, while we are turned back again to the conversation of the old man, we become entangled in deadly snares, even as the apostle, with foresight and wholesomeness, forewarned us and said: "So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" [Romans 8:12–14]. If we are the sons of God; if we are already beginning to be His temples; if, having received the Holy Spirit, we are living holy and spiritually; if we have raised our eyes from earth to heaven; if we have lifted our hearts, filled with God and Christ, to things above and divine, let us do nothing but what is worthy of God and Christ, even as the apostle arouses and exhorts us, saying: "If then you have been raised with Christ,

seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” [Colossians 3:1–4]. Let us, then, who in Baptism have both died and been buried in respect to the carnal sins of the old man, who have risen again with Christ in the heavenly regeneration, both think upon and do the things that are Christ’s.

—Cyprian

### Hymnody

Remove the pow’r of sin from me  
And cleanse all my impurity  
That I may have the strength and will  
Temptations of the flesh to still.

—Renew Me, O Eternal Light  
(*LSB* 704:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You gave Your servant Cyprian boldness to confess the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, before the rulers of this world and courage to die for the faith he proclaimed. Give us strength always to be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us and to suffer gladly for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1091)

### Cyprian of Carthage, Pastor and Martyr

Cyprian (ca. AD 200–258) was acclaimed bishop of the North African city of Carthage around AD 248. During the persecution of Roman Emperor Decius, Cyprian fled

Carthage but returned two years later. He was then forced to deal with the problem of Christians who had lapsed from their faith under persecution and now wanted to return to the Church. It was decided that these lapsed Christians could be restored but that their restoration could take place only after a period of penance that demonstrated their faithfulness. During the persecution under Emperor Valerian, Cyprian at first went into hiding but later gave himself up to the authorities. He was beheaded for the faith in Carthage in AD 258.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIa (V) 11–27

## 17 SEPTEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Out | of the depths\*  
I cry to you, | O LORD!
- <sup>2</sup> O Lord, | hear my voice!\*  
Let your ears be attentive to the voice  
of my pleas for | mercy!
- <sup>3</sup> If you, O LORD, should mark in- | iquities,\*  
O Lord, | who could stand?
- <sup>4</sup> But with you there is for- | givenness,\*  
that you | may be feared.
- <sup>5</sup> I wait for the LORD, my | soul waits,\*  
and in his | word I hope;
- <sup>6</sup> my soul waits for the Lord more than  
watchmen for the | morning,\*  
more than watchmen for the | morning.
- <sup>7</sup> O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the  
LORD there is | steadfast love,\*  
and with him is plentiful re- | demption.

<sup>8</sup> And he will redeem | Israel\*  
from all his in- | iquities.  
—Psalm 130

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 143*

## Old Testament Reading: 2 Chronicles 36:1–23

### Judah's Decline

<sup>1</sup>The people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Then the king of Egypt deposed him in Jerusalem and laid on the land a tribute of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. <sup>4</sup>And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But Neco took Jehoahaz his brother and carried him to Egypt.

<sup>5</sup>Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. <sup>6</sup>Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon. <sup>7</sup>Nebuchadnezzar also carried part of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his palace in Babylon. <sup>8</sup>Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and the abominations that he did, and what was found against him, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

<sup>9</sup>Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. <sup>10</sup>In

the spring of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon, with the precious vessels of the house of the LORD, and made his brother Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>11</sup>Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. <sup>12</sup>He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>13</sup>He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God. He stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD, the God of Israel. <sup>14</sup>All the officers of the priests and the people likewise were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations. And they polluted the house of the LORD that he had made holy in Jerusalem.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. <sup>16</sup>But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy.

### Jerusalem Captured and Burned

<sup>17</sup>Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged. He gave them all into his hand. <sup>18</sup>And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon.

<sup>19</sup>And they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its palaces with fire and destroyed all its precious vessels. <sup>20</sup>He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, <sup>21</sup>to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

#### The Proclamation of Cyrus

<sup>22</sup>Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing. <sup>23</sup>“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.’”

### New Testament Reading: Colossians 4:1–18

[Rules for Christian Households]

<sup>1</sup>Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

#### Further Instructions

<sup>2</sup>Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. <sup>3</sup>At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am

in prison—<sup>4</sup>that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

<sup>5</sup>Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

#### Final Greetings

<sup>7</sup>Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. <sup>8</sup>I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, <sup>9</sup>and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

<sup>10</sup>Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), <sup>11</sup>and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. <sup>12</sup>Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. <sup>13</sup>For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. <sup>14</sup>Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. <sup>15</sup>Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. <sup>16</sup>And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. <sup>17</sup>And

say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

<sup>18</sup>I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

*Additional Reading: Philemon 1–25*

## Writing

16. The person who believes that he can obtain grace by doing what is in him adds sin to sin so that he becomes doubly guilty.

On the basis of what has been said, the following is clear: While a person is doing what is in him, he sins and seeks himself in everything. But if he should suppose that through sin he would become worthy of or prepared for grace, he would add haughty arrogance to his sin and not believe that sin is sin and evil is evil, which is an exceedingly great sin. As Jer. 2[:13] says, “For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water,” that is, through sin they are far from me and yet they presume to do good by their own ability.

Now you ask, “What then shall we do? Shall we go our way with indifference because we can do nothing but sin?” I would reply, By no means. But, having heard this, fall down and pray for grace and place your hope in Christ in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection. For this reason we are so instructed—for this reason the law makes us aware of sin so that, having recognized our sin, we may seek and receive grace. Thus God “gives grace to the humble” [I Pet. 5:5], and “whoever humbles himself will be exalted” [Matt. 23:12]. The law humbles, grace exalts. The law effects fear and wrath, grace effects

hope and mercy. “Through the law comes knowledge of sin” [Rom. 8:20], through knowledge of sin, however, comes humility, and through humility grace is acquired. Thus an action which is alien to God’s nature results in a deed belonging to his very nature: he makes a person a sinner so that he may make him righteous.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Forth in Thy name, O Lord, I go,  
My daily labor to pursue,  
Thee, only Thee, resolved to know  
In all I think or speak or do.

—Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I Go  
(LSB 854:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Let Your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H69)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIa (V) 28–45

## 18 SEPTEMBER

## Psalmody

<sup>5</sup>Out of my distress I called | on the LORD;\*  
the LORD answered me and | set me free.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD is on my side; I | will not fear.\*  
What can man | do to me?

- <sup>7</sup>The LORD is on my side as my | helper;\*  
I shall look in triumph on those  
who | hate me.
- <sup>8</sup>It is better to take refuge | in the LORD\*  
than to | trust in man.
- <sup>9</sup>It is better to take refuge | in the LORD\*  
than to trust in | princes.
- <sup>10</sup>All nations sur- | rounded me;\*  
in the name of the LORD I | cut them off!
- <sup>11</sup>They surrounded me, surrounded me  
on | every side;\*  
in the name of the LORD I | cut them off!
- <sup>12</sup>They surrounded me like bees; they went  
out like a fire a- | mong thorns;\*  
in the name of the LORD I | cut them off!
- <sup>13</sup>I was pushed hard, so that I was | falling,\*  
but the LORD | helped me.
- <sup>14</sup>The LORD is my strength | and my song;\*  
he has become my sal- | vation.

—Psalm 118:5–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 118*

### Old Testament Reading: Nehemiah 1:1–2:10

Report from Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup>The words of Nehemiah the son of  
Hacaliah.

Now it happened in the month of  
Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in  
Susa the capital, <sup>2</sup>that Hanani, one of my  
brothers, came with certain men from Judah.  
And I asked them concerning the Jews who  
escaped, who had survived the exile, and  
concerning Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>And they said to me,  
“The remnant there in the province who  
had survived the exile is in great trouble  
and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken  
down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.”

Nehemiah's Prayer

<sup>4</sup>As soon as I heard these words I sat  
down and wept and mourned for days, and  
I continued fasting and praying before the  
God of heaven. <sup>5</sup>And I said, “O LORD God  
of heaven, the great and awesome God who  
keeps covenant and steadfast love with those  
who love him and keep his commandments,  
<sup>6</sup>let your ear be attentive and your eyes open,  
to hear the prayer of your servant that I  
now pray before you day and night for the  
people of Israel your servants, confessing the  
sins of the people of Israel, which we have  
sinned against you. Even I and my father's  
house have sinned. <sup>7</sup>We have acted very  
corruptly against you and have not kept the  
commandments, the statutes, and the rules  
that you commanded your servant Moses.  
<sup>8</sup>Remember the word that you commanded  
your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are  
unfaithful, I will scatter you among the  
peoples, <sup>9</sup>but if you return to me and keep my  
commandments and do them, though your  
outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven,  
from there I will gather them and bring them  
to the place that I have chosen, to make my  
name dwell there.’ <sup>10</sup>They are your servants  
and your people, whom you have redeemed  
by your great power and by your strong  
hand. <sup>11</sup>O Lord, let your ear be attentive to  
the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer  
of your servants who delight to fear your  
name, and give success to your servant today,  
and grant him mercy in the sight of this  
man.”

Now I was cupbearer to the king.

Nehemiah Sent to Judah

<sup>2:1</sup>In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth  
year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was  
before him, I took up the wine and gave it  
to the king. Now I had not been sad in his

presence. <sup>2</sup>And the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid. <sup>3</sup>I said to the king, “Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?” <sup>4</sup>Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. <sup>5</sup>And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ graves, that I may rebuild it.” <sup>6</sup>And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), “How long will you be gone, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time. <sup>7</sup>And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, <sup>8</sup>and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.” And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Nehemiah Inspects Jerusalem’s Walls

<sup>9</sup>Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River and gave them the king’s letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. <sup>10</sup>But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel.

*Additional Reading: Haggai 1:1–2:23*

## New Testament Reading: 1 Timothy 1:1–20

Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

<sup>2</sup>To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Warning Against False Teachers

<sup>3</sup>As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, <sup>4</sup>nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. <sup>5</sup>The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. <sup>6</sup>Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, <sup>7</sup>desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

<sup>8</sup>Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, <sup>9</sup>understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, <sup>10</sup>the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, <sup>11</sup>in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Christ Jesus Came to Save Sinners

<sup>12</sup>I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged

me faithful, appointing me to his service, <sup>13</sup>though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup>and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup>But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup>To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>18</sup>This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, <sup>19</sup>holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, <sup>20</sup>among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

## Writing

“O Timothy, keep the deposit, shunning profane novelties of words and oppositions of the knowledge falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith” [1 Timothy 6:20]. After words such as these, is there anyone of so hardened a front, such anvil-like impudence, such adamantine pertinacity, as not to succumb to so huge a mass, not to be crushed by so ponderous a weight, not to be shaken in pieces by such heavy blows, not to be annihilated by such dreadful thunderbolts of divine eloquence? “Shun profane novelties,” he says. He does

not say shun “antiquity.” But he plainly points to what ought to follow by the rule of contrary. For if novelty is to be shunned, antiquity is to be held fast; if novelty is profane, antiquity is sacred. He adds, “And oppositions of science falsely so called.” “Falsely called” indeed, as applied to the doctrines of heretics, where ignorance is disguised under the name of knowledge, fog of sunshine, darkness of light.

—Vincent of Lérins

## Hymnody

I trust in Him with all my heart;  
Now all my sorrow ceases.  
His words abiding peace impart;  
His blood from guilt releases.  
Free grace through Him I now obtain;  
He washes me from ev'ry stain,  
And pure I stand before Him.

—If Your Beloved Son, O God  
(LSB 568:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, whose nature it is always to have mercy, visit with Your fatherly correction all who have erred and gone astray from the truth of Your holy Word, and bring them to a true sense of their error that they may again receive and hold fast Your unchangeable truth; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (114)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIa (V) 46–58

## 19 SEPTEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for | he is good,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever.
- <sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the | God of gods,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever.
- <sup>3</sup> Give thanks to the | Lord of lords,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>4</sup> to him who alone does great | wonders,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>5</sup> to him who by understanding  
made the | heavens,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>6</sup> to him who spread out the earth  
above the | waters,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>7</sup> to him who made the | great lights,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>8</sup> the sun to rule o- | ver the day,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- <sup>9</sup> the moon and stars to rule o- | ver the night,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;
- Psalm 136:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 136*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Nehemiah 2:11–20; 4:1–6**

[Nehemiah Inspects Jerusalem's Walls]

<sup>11</sup> So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days. <sup>12</sup> Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no animal with me but the one on which I rode. <sup>13</sup> I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. <sup>14</sup> Then

I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal that was under me to pass. <sup>15</sup> Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. <sup>16</sup> And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work.

<sup>17</sup> Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision." <sup>18</sup> And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work. <sup>19</sup> But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" <sup>20</sup> Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem." . . .

Opposition to the Work

<sup>4:1</sup> Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. <sup>2</sup> And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned

ones at that?” <sup>3</sup>Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, “Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!” <sup>4</sup>Hear, O our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunt on their own heads and give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives. <sup>5</sup>Do not cover their guilt, and let not their sin be blotted out from your sight, for they have provoked you to anger in the presence of the builders.

<sup>6</sup>So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.

### New Testament Reading:

#### 1 Timothy 2:1–15

Pray for All People

<sup>1</sup>First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup>for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup>This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup>For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. <sup>7</sup>For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

<sup>8</sup>I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; <sup>9</sup>likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable ap-parel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, <sup>10</sup>but with what is proper for

women who profess godliness—with good works. <sup>11</sup>Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. <sup>12</sup>I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. <sup>13</sup>For Adam was formed first, then Eve; <sup>14</sup>and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. <sup>15</sup>Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

### Writing

I do not know how to change in the least what I have previously and constantly taught about justification. Namely, that through faith, as St. Peter says, we have a new and clean heart [Acts 15:9–11], and God will and does account us entirely righteous and holy for the sake of Christ, our Mediator [1 Timothy 2:5]. Although sin in the flesh has not yet been completely removed or become dead [Romans 7:18], yet He will not punish or remember it.

Such faith, renewal, and forgiveness of sins are followed by good works [Ephesians 2:8–9]. What is still sinful or imperfect in them will not be counted as sin or defect, for Christ’s sake [Psalm 32:1–2; Romans 4:7–8]. The entire individual, both his person and his works, is declared to be righteous and holy from pure grace and mercy, shed upon us and spread over us in Christ. Therefore, we cannot boast of many merits and works, if they are viewed apart from grace and mercy. As it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:31); namely, that he has a gracious God. For with that, all is well. We say, besides, that if good works do not follow, the faith is false and not true.

—Smalcald Articles III XIII 1–4

## Hymnody

Come, Thou precious Ransom, come,  
 Only hope for sinful mortals!  
 Come, O Savior of the world!  
 Open are to Thee all portals.  
 Come, Thy beauty let us see;  
 Anxiously we wait for Thee.  
 —Come, Thou Precious Ransom,  
 Come (*LSB* 350:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, grant that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Your governance that Your Church may joyfully serve You in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H64)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XIIa (V) 59–67

## 20 SEPTEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> God is our ref- | uge and strength,\*  
 a very present help in | trouble.
- <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear though the | earth  
 gives way,\*  
 though the mountains be moved  
 into the heart | of the sea,
- <sup>3</sup> though its waters | roar and foam,\*  
 though the mountains tremble  
 at its | swelling.
- <sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad  
 the cit- | y of God,\*  
 the holy habitation of the | Most High.

- <sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of her;  
 she shall | not be moved;\*  
 God will help her when | morning dawns.
- <sup>6</sup> The nations rage, the kingdoms | totter;\*  
 he utters his voice, the | earth melts.
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is | with us;\*  
 the God of Jacob is our | fortress.
- <sup>8</sup> Come, behold the works | of the LORD,\*  
 how he has brought desolations | on  
 the earth.
- <sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the end | of  
 the earth;\*  
 he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
 he burns the chariots | with fire.
- <sup>10</sup> “Be still, and know that | I am God.\*  
 I will be exalted among the nations,  
 I will be exalted | in the earth!”
- <sup>11</sup> The LORD of hosts is | with us;\*  
 the God of Jacob is our | fortress.  
 —Psalm 46

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 54*

## Old Testament Reading: Nehemiah 4:7–23

[Opposition to the Work]

<sup>7</sup>But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. <sup>8</sup>And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. <sup>9</sup>And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.

<sup>10</sup>In Judah it was said, “The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall.” <sup>11</sup>And our enemies said, “They will not know or see till

we come among them and kill them and stop the work.”<sup>12</sup> At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, “You must return to us.”<sup>13</sup> So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, their spears, and their bows.<sup>14</sup> And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the LORD, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.”

#### The Work Resumes

<sup>15</sup>When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work.<sup>16</sup> From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah,<sup>17</sup> who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other.<sup>18</sup> And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me.<sup>19</sup> And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another.<sup>20</sup> In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.”

<sup>21</sup>So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out.<sup>22</sup> I also said to the people at that time, “Let every man and his

servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day.”<sup>23</sup> So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon at his right hand.

### New Testament Reading: 1 Timothy 3:1–16

#### Qualifications for Overseers

<sup>1</sup>The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.<sup>2</sup> Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,<sup>3</sup> not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.<sup>4</sup> He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive,<sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? <sup>6</sup>He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

#### Qualifications for Deacons

<sup>8</sup>Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.<sup>9</sup> They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.<sup>10</sup> And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.<sup>11</sup> Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.<sup>12</sup> Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing

their children and their own households well. <sup>13</sup>For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

#### The Mystery of Godliness

<sup>14</sup>I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, <sup>15</sup>if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. <sup>16</sup>Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:

He was manifested in the flesh,  
vindicated by the Spirit,  
seen by angels,  
proclaimed among the nations,  
believed on in the world,  
taken up in glory.

#### Writing

Now, as often happens, those who covet pre-eminence, seeking support for their own cupidity, take advantage of the Apostle's statement when he says: "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Yet, while praising the desire, the Apostle forthwith qualifies his praise by adding a reason for fear, promptly adding, as he does: "But it behoveth a bishop to be blameless." When he proceeds with an enumeration of the necessary virtues, he explains what this blamelessness is. He, therefore, approves the desire, but warns these people by his precept, as though he plainly said: "I praise what you seek, but acquaint yourselves first with what you are seeking, lest by neglecting to take the measure of your own fitness, you become the more blameworthy and detestable, in that you hasten to be seen by all on the pinnacle of honour." The great master in the art of

ruling urges subjects on by approving of their desire, but deters them by fear, in order that he may restrain his hearers from pride, and by praising the office sought, may dispose them for the kind of life required. . . .

Wherefore, that man gives testimony against himself that he is not desiring the office of a bishop, if he seeks the glory of that honour, but not the ministry of a good work. For a man not only fails completely to love the office, but he is ignorant of it, if, yearning for supreme rule, he feasts on the subjection of others in the hidden reveries of his thought, is glad to hear his own praises, feels his heart surge with honour, and rejoices in the abundance of his affluence. It is, therefore, worldly gain that he seeks under the guise of that kind of honour, whereby worldly gain should have been destroyed, and when the mind thinks to grasp the highest state of humility in order to cherish its own pride, it changes the intrinsic nature of what was exteriorly desired.

—Gregory the Great

#### Hymnody

Anoint them prophets, men who are intent  
To be Your witnesses in word and deed,  
Their hearts aflame, their lips made eloquent,  
Their eyes awake to ev'ry human need.

—God of the Prophets, Bless the  
Prophets' Sons (*LSB* 682:2)

#### Prayer of the Day

O God, You led Your holy apostles to ordain pastors in every place. Grant that Your flock, under the guidance of Your Holy Spirit, may choose suitable men for the ministry of Word and Sacrament and may uphold them in their work for the extension

of Your kingdom; through Him who is the chief Shepherd of our souls, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (121)

**Suggested Reading from  
the Book of Concord**

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIa (V) 68–82

**21 SEPTEMBER**

*St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist*

**Psalmody**

- <sup>12</sup> For it is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could | bear it;\*  
it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could | hide from him.
- <sup>13</sup> But it is you, a man, my | equal,\*  
my companion, my fa- | miliar friend.
- <sup>14</sup> We used to take sweet counsel to- | gether;\*  
within God’s house we walked | in the throng.
- <sup>15</sup> Let death steal over them;  
let them go down to She- | ol alive;\*  
for evil is in their dwelling place  
and | in their heart.
- <sup>16</sup> But I | call to God,\*  
and the LORD will | save me.
- <sup>17</sup> Evening and morning and at noon I utter  
my com- | plaint and moan,\*  
and he | hears my voice.
- <sup>18</sup> He redeems my soul in safety  
from the battle | that I wage,\*  
for many are arrayed a- | gainst me.

<sup>19</sup> God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned | from of old,\*  
because they do not change and do | not fear God.

—Psalm 55:12–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:89–96*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Nehemiah 5:1–16; 6:1–9, 15–16**

Nehemiah Stops Oppression of the Poor

<sup>1</sup>Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. <sup>2</sup>For there were those who said, “With our sons and our daughters, we are many. So let us get grain, that we may eat and keep alive.” <sup>3</sup>There were also those who said, “We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine.” <sup>4</sup>And there were those who said, “We have borrowed money for the king’s tax on our fields and our vineyards. <sup>5</sup>Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our children are as their children. Yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but it is not in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards.”

<sup>6</sup>I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. <sup>7</sup>I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, “You are exacting interest, each from his brother.” And I held a great assembly against them <sup>8</sup>and said to them, “We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us!” They were silent and could not find a word to say. <sup>9</sup>So I said, “The thing that you

are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? <sup>10</sup>Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us abandon this exacting of interest. <sup>11</sup>Return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the percentage of money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them.”

<sup>12</sup>Then they said, “We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say.” And I called the priests and made them swear to do as they had promised. <sup>13</sup>I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, “So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not keep this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied.” And all the assembly said “Amen” and praised the LORD. And the people did as they had promised.

#### Nehemiah's Generosity

<sup>14</sup>Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor. <sup>15</sup>The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God. <sup>16</sup>I also persevered in the work on this wall, and we acquired no land, and all my servants were gathered there for the work. . . .

#### Conspiracy Against Nehemiah

<sup>6:1</sup>Now when Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies heard that I had built the wall and

that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), <sup>2</sup>Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, “Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono.” But they intended to do me harm. <sup>3</sup>And I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?” <sup>4</sup>And they sent to me four times in this way, and I answered them in the same manner. <sup>5</sup>In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand. <sup>6</sup>In it was written, “It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall. And according to these reports you wish to become their king. <sup>7</sup>And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem, ‘There is a king in Judah.’ And now the king will hear of these reports. So now come and let us take counsel together.” <sup>8</sup>Then I sent to him, saying, “No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind.” <sup>9</sup>For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done.” But now, O God, strengthen my hands. . . .

#### The Wall Is Finished

<sup>15</sup>So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. <sup>16</sup>And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

**New Testament Reading:**  
**1 Timothy 4:1–16**

Some Will Depart from the Faith

<sup>1</sup>Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, <sup>2</sup>through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, <sup>3</sup>who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. <sup>4</sup>For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, <sup>5</sup>for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

<sup>6</sup>If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. <sup>7</sup>Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; <sup>8</sup>for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. <sup>9</sup>The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. <sup>10</sup>For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

<sup>11</sup>Command and teach these things.

<sup>12</sup>Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. <sup>13</sup>Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

<sup>14</sup>Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. <sup>15</sup>Practice

these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. <sup>16</sup>Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

**Writing**

St. Matthew was an excellent, noble man—not only one of the twelve fountains of consolation, the apostles of Jesus Christ, but also one of the four great spiritual streams of paradise, a holy evangelist, whose words flow from the great fountain in paradise, Jesus Christ. He not only praised the Lord Jesus in his heart and with his tongue, but he also put his quill to paper and wrote his account as a memorial, and finally he confirmed the truth of his Gospel with his blood. Is this not an honorable man? Pay attention so that everything in and about you is directed toward the glory of the Lord Jesus, according to David’s example in Ps. 103:2. In the kingdom of God it is said: “Et quacunque potes arte placere, place,” that is, “Strive with every skill and word, to please your Savior, Christ the Lord.” . . . None of the other evangelists described the history of the Lord Jesus to such an extent as Matthew. He also has many beautiful passages that cannot be found in the others. Here the Lord Jesus says (11:28), “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And again (18[:20]), “Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them.” And in 28:20, “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” These three passages, which should cause the legs of all devout Christians to run quickly to the Church, were written only by Matthew. . . . Ever since that time, his book has always been valued highly. Jerome reports that

St. Bartholomew preached the Gospel of Matthew in India. Nicephorus writes that in those lands a collection of St. Bartholomew's sermons existed. Theophylact and others report that St. John, or even Mark, translated the Gospel of Matthew into the Greek language. . . . [Some say] that in the 479th year after Christ's birth, [Matthew's] body was found on Cyprus and on his chest was a copy of his Gospel, and that his body was transferred to Constantinople and buried in the Church of St. Stephan.

—Valerius Herberger

### Hymnody

Anoint them priests, strong intercessors they,  
For pardon and for love and hope and peace,  
That, through their pleading, guilty sinners  
may

Find Jesus' mercy and from sin release.

—God of the Prophets, Bless the  
Prophets' Sons (*LSB* 682:3)

### Prayer of the Day

O Son of God, our blessed Savior Jesus Christ, You called Matthew the tax collector to be an apostle and evangelist. Through his faithful and inspired witness, grant that we also may follow You, leaving behind all covetous desires and love of riches; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F28)

### St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

St. Matthew, also known as Levi, identifies himself as a former tax collector, one who was therefore considered unclean, a public sinner, outcast from the Jews. Yet it was such a one as this whom the Lord Jesus called away from his occupation and wealth

to become a disciple (Matthew 9:9–13). Not only did Matthew become a disciple of Jesus, he was also called and sent as one of the Lord's twelve apostles (Matthew 10:2–4). In time, he became the evangelist whose inspired record of the Gospel was granted first place in the ordering of the New Testament. Among the four Gospels, Matthew's portrays Christ especially as the new and greater Moses, who graciously fulfills the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17) and establishes a new covenant of salvation in and with His own blood (Matthew 26:27–28). Matthew's Gospel is also well-known and beloved for its record of the visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1–12); for the Sermon on the Mount, including the Beatitudes and the Our Father (Matthew 5–7); and for the institution of Holy Baptism and the most explicit revelation of the Holy Trinity (Matthew 28:16–20). Tradition is uncertain where his final field of labor was and whether Matthew died naturally or a martyr's death. In celebrating this festival, we therefore give thanks to God that He has mightily governed and protected His Holy Church through this man who was called and sent by Christ to serve the sheep of His pastures with the Holy Gospel.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIa (V) 83–97

## 22 SEPTEMBER

*Jonah***Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup> Behold, how good and pleasant it is\*  
when brothers dwell in unity!

<sup>2</sup> It is like the precious oil on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
on the beard of Aaron,\*  
running down on the collar | of  
his robes!

<sup>3</sup> It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls  
on the mountains of Zion!\*

For there the LORD has commanded  
the blessing, life forevermore.

—Psalm 133

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:97–104*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Nehemiah 7:1–4; 8:1–18**

[The Wall Is Finished]

<sup>1</sup> Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed,

<sup>2</sup> I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many. <sup>3</sup> And I said to them, “Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot. And while they are still standing guard, let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their guard posts and some in front of their own homes.”

<sup>4</sup> The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt. . . .

Ezra Reads the Law

<sup>8:1</sup> And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. <sup>2</sup> So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. <sup>3</sup> And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. <sup>4</sup> And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uria, Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand. <sup>5</sup> And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. <sup>6</sup> And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. <sup>7</sup> Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. <sup>8</sup> They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

This Day Is Holy

<sup>9</sup> And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all

the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. <sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” <sup>11</sup>So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved.” <sup>12</sup>And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

#### Feast of Booths Celebrated

<sup>13</sup>On the second day the heads of fathers’ houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law. <sup>14</sup>And they found it written in the Law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, <sup>15</sup>and that they should proclaim it and publish it in all their towns and in Jerusalem, “Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written.” <sup>16</sup>So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. <sup>17</sup>And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. <sup>18</sup>And day by day, from the first day to the

last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.

*Additional Reading: Ezra 1:1–10:19*

### New Testament Reading:

#### 1 Timothy 5:1–16

Instructions for the Church

<sup>1</sup>Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, <sup>2</sup>older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

<sup>3</sup>Honor widows who are truly widows. <sup>4</sup>But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup>She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, <sup>6</sup>but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. <sup>7</sup>Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. <sup>8</sup>But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

<sup>9</sup>Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, <sup>10</sup>and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

<sup>11</sup>But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry <sup>12</sup>and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their

former faith. <sup>13</sup>Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. <sup>14</sup>So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. <sup>15</sup>For some have already strayed after Satan. <sup>16</sup>If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

### Writing

[Worship] is not a function of the mouth but of the whole body. It is to bow the head, bend the body, fall on the knees, prostrate one's self, and so forth, and to do such things as a sign and acknowledgment of an authority and power; just as people bow in silence before secular princes and Lords, and just as popes, bishops, abbots, and people generally, have themselves honored and adored [*ehrbieten*] by bowing and kneeling, and so forth. Such outward adoration [*ehrbietunge*] is what the Scriptures really mean by worship [*anbeten*]. . . . We read in the Scriptures that worship [*anbeten*] or adoration [*ehrbieten*] is rendered outwardly both to God and to kings without distinction, just as bowing and kneeling are still rendered outwardly both to God and to men.

From this understanding of outward worship you will also understand what Christ meant by true spiritual worship. It is the adoration or bowing of the heart, so that from the bottom of your heart you thereby show and confess yourself to be his subordinate creature. For from this you see that true worship can be nothing else

than faith; it is faith's sublimest activity with respect to God. For no one is capable of such heartfelt confession, adoration, bending, and bowing (or whatever you want to call it) before God in his heart, unless he unwaveringly holds God to be his Lord and Father, from whom he receives and will receive all good things, and through whom, without any merit on his part, he is redeemed and preserved from all sins and evil.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Penitent sinners, for mercy crying,  
Pardon and peace from Him obtain;  
Ever the wants of the poor supplying,  
Their faithful God He will remain.  
He helps His children in distress,  
The widows and the fatherless.  
Alleluia, alleluia!

—Praise the Almighty (*LSB* 797:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, through the prophet Jonah, You continued the prophetic pattern of teaching Your people the true faith and demonstrating through miracles Your presence in creation to heal it of its brokenness. Grant that Your Church may see in Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the final end-times prophet whose teaching and miracles continue in Your Church through the healing medicine of the Gospel and the Sacraments; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1092)

### Jonah

A singular prophet among the many in the Old Testament, Jonah the son of Amittai was born about an hour's walk from the

town of Nazareth. The focus of his prophetic ministry was the call to preach at Nineveh, the capital of pagan Assyria (Jonah 1:2). His reluctance to respond and God's insistence that His call be heeded is the story of the book that bears Jonah's name. Although the swallowing and disgorging of Jonah by the great fish is the most remembered detail of his life, it is addressed in only three verses of the book (Jonah 1:17; 2:1, 10). Throughout the book, the important theme is how God deals compassionately with sinners. Jonah's three-day sojourn in the belly of the fish is mentioned by Jesus as a sign of His own death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 12:39–41).

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIb (VI) 1–15 [98–112]

## 23 SEPTEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in in- | iquity,\*  
and in sin did my mother con- | ceive me.
- <sup>6</sup> Behold, you delight in truth  
in the inward | being,\*  
and you teach me wisdom  
in the | secret heart.
- <sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop,  
and I | shall be clean;\*  
wash me, and I shall be  
whit- | er than snow.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and | gladness,\*  
let the bones that you  
have bro- | ken rejoice.

- <sup>9</sup> Hide your face | from my sins,\*  
and blot out all my in- | iquities.
- <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, | O God,\*  
and renew a right spirit with- | in me.
- <sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from your | presence,\*  
and take not your Holy Spirit | from me.
- <sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your sal- | vation,\*  
and uphold me with a willing | spirit.
- <sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors | your ways,\*  
and sinners will re- | turn to you.
- Psalm 51:5–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 12*

### Old Testament Reading: Nehemiah 9:1–21

The People of Israel Confess Their Sin

<sup>1</sup>Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. <sup>2</sup>And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. <sup>3</sup>And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the Lord their God. <sup>4</sup>On the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani; and they cried with a loud voice to the LORD their God. <sup>5</sup>Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, "Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. <sup>6</sup>"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the

seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you. <sup>7</sup>You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham. <sup>8</sup>You found his heart faithful before you, and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite. And you have kept your promise, for you are righteous.

<sup>9</sup>“And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea, <sup>10</sup>and performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers. And you made a name for yourself, as it is to this day. <sup>11</sup>And you divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land, and you cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters. <sup>12</sup>By a pillar of cloud you led them in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way in which they should go. <sup>13</sup>You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments, <sup>14</sup>and you made known to them your holy Sabbath and commanded them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses your servant. <sup>15</sup>You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger and brought water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and you told them to go in to possess the land that you had sworn to give them.

<sup>16</sup>“But they and our fathers acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck and did not obey your commandments. <sup>17</sup>They refused to obey and were not mindful of the

wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them. <sup>18</sup>Even when they had made for themselves a golden calf and said, ‘This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt,’ and had committed great blasphemies, <sup>19</sup>you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go. <sup>20</sup>You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. <sup>21</sup>Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.”

### **New Testament Reading:** **1 Timothy 5:17–6:2**

<sup>17</sup>Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. <sup>18</sup>For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.” <sup>19</sup>Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>20</sup>As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. <sup>21</sup>In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. <sup>22</sup>Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure. <sup>23</sup>(No longer drink only

water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.)

<sup>24</sup>The sins of some men are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. <sup>25</sup>So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.

<sup>6:1</sup>Let all who are under a yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. <sup>2</sup>Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.

False Teachers and True Contentment  
Teach and urge these things.

## Writing

Benedict of Nursia's advice about singing.

We believe that God is present everywhere and that the eyes of the Lord behold the good and the bad in every place (cf. Prov. 15:3). Let us firmly believe this, especially when we take part in [the Divine Service]. Let us, therefore, always be mindful of what the prophet says, "Serve the Lord with fear" (Ps. 2:11). And again, "Sing wisely" (Ps. 46:8). And, "I will sing praise to You in the sight of the angels" (Ps. 137:1). Therefore, let us consider how it benefits us to behave in the sight of God and His angels, and let us then stand to sing, that our minds may be in harmony with our voices.

Benedict's advice about prayer.

If we do not dare to approach men who are in power except with humility and reverence when we wish to ask a favor, how

much must we make requests of the Lord God of all things with all humility and purity of devotion? And let us be assured that it is not in many words, but it is by hearts [declared] pure and with repentant tears, that we are heard. For this reason prayer ought to be short and pure, unless, perhaps, it is lengthened by the inspiration of divine grace. When we pray together [in the Divine Service], however, let the prayer always be short.

—Benedict of Nursia

## Hymnody

We share our mutual woes,  
Our mutual burdens bear,  
And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear.

—Blest Be the Tie That Binds  
(*LSB* 649:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord of all power and might, author and giver of all good things, graft into our hearts the love of Your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of Your great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H66)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIb (VI) 16–24 [113–121]

## 24 SEPTEMBER

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>To you I lift | up my eyes,\*

O you who are enthroned  
in the | heavens!

<sup>2</sup>Behold, as the eyes of servants look to  
the hand of their master, as the eyes of a  
maidservant to the hand of her | mistress,\*  
so our eyes look to the LORD our God,  
till he has mercy up- | on us.

<sup>3</sup>Have mercy upon us, O LORD,  
have mercy up- | on us,\*  
for we have had more than enough | of  
contempt.

<sup>4</sup>Our soul has had more than enough  
of the scorn of those who | are at ease,\*  
of the contempt | of the proud.

—Psalm 123

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 99*

### Old Testament Reading: Nehemiah 9:22–38

[The People of Israel Confess Their Sin]

<sup>22</sup>“And you gave them kingdoms and peoples and allotted to them every corner. So they took possession of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon and the land of Og king of Bashan. <sup>23</sup>You multiplied their children as the stars of heaven, and you brought them into the land that you had told their fathers to enter and possess. <sup>24</sup>So the descendants went in and possessed the land, and you subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gave them into their hand, with their kings and the peoples of the land, that they might do with them as they would. <sup>25</sup>And they captured fortified cities and a rich land, and took possession of houses full of all good things, cisterns already hewn,

vineyards, olive orchards and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and became fat and delighted themselves in your great goodness.

<sup>26</sup>“Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their back and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies. <sup>27</sup>Therefore you gave them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer. And in the time of their suffering they cried out to you and you heard them from heaven, and according to your great mercies you gave them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies. <sup>28</sup>But after they had rest they did evil again before you, and you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them. Yet when they turned and cried to you, you heard from heaven, and many times you delivered them according to your mercies. <sup>29</sup>And you warned them in order to turn them back to your law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your rules, which if a person does them, he shall live by them, and they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey. <sup>30</sup>Many years you bore with them and warned them by your Spirit through your prophets. Yet they would not give ear. Therefore you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands.

<sup>31</sup>Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

<sup>32</sup>“Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your

people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day. <sup>33</sup>Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly. <sup>34</sup>Our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept your law or paid attention to your commandments and your warnings that you gave them. <sup>35</sup>Even in their own kingdom, and amid your great goodness that you gave them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve you or turn from their wicked works. <sup>36</sup>Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. <sup>37</sup>And its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress.

<sup>38</sup>“Because of all this we make a firm covenant in writing; on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests.”

*Additional Reading: Nehemiah 10:1–13:31*

### **New Testament Reading: 1 Timothy 6:3–21**

[False Teachers and True Contentment]

<sup>3</sup>If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, <sup>4</sup>he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, <sup>5</sup>and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. <sup>6</sup>Now there is great gain in godliness with

contentment, <sup>7</sup>for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. <sup>8</sup>But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. <sup>9</sup>But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup>For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

<sup>11</sup>But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. <sup>12</sup>Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. <sup>13</sup>I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, <sup>14</sup>to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup>which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, <sup>16</sup>who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

<sup>17</sup>As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. <sup>18</sup>They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, <sup>19</sup>thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

<sup>20</sup>O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” <sup>21</sup>for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.

Grace be with you.

### Writing

The one body of Christ has a threefold existence, or all three modes of being at a given place. First, the circumscribed corporeal mode of presence, as when He walked bodily on earth, when He occupied and yielded space according to His size. He can still employ this mode of presence when He wills to do so, as He did after His resurrection and as He will do on the Last Day, as Paul says in 1 Timothy [6:15], “Whom the blessed God will reveal,” and Colossians 3[:4], “When Christ your life reveals Himself.” He is not in God or with the Father or in heaven according to this mode . . . , for God is not a corporeal space or place . . .

Secondly, the uncircumscribed, spiritual mode of presence according to which He neither occupies nor yields space but passes through everything created as He wills. To use some crude illustrations, my vision passes through and exists in air, light, or water and does not occupy or yield any space; a sound or tone passes through and exists in air or water or a board and a wall and neither occupies nor yields space. . . . He employed this mode of presence when He left the closed grave and came through closed doors, in the bread and wine in the Supper, and, as people believe, when He was born in His mother.

Thirdly, since He is one person with God, the divine, heavenly mode, according to which all created things are indeed much

more permeable and present to Him than they are according to the second mode. . . . You must place this existence of Christ, which constitutes Him one person with God, far, far beyond things created, as far as God transcends them; and on the other hand, place it as deep in and as near to all created things as God is in them. For He is one indivisible person with God, and wherever God is, He must be also, otherwise our faith is false.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VII 98–101

### Hymnody

To Thee, great One in Three,  
Eternal praises be  
Hence evermore!  
Thy sov'reign majesty  
May we in glory see,  
And to eternity  
Love and adore.

—Come, Thou Almighty King  
(LSB 905:4)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, our refuge and strength, the author of all godliness, by Your grace hear the prayers of Your Church. Grant that those things which we ask in faith we may receive through Your bountiful mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C80)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIb (VI) 25–33 [122–130]

## 25 SEPTEMBER

Propers for September 25–October 29 for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.

## Psalmody

- <sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in in- | iquity,\*  
and in sin did my mother con- | ceive me.
- <sup>6</sup> Behold, you delight in truth in the  
inward | being,\*  
and you teach me wisdom  
in the | secret heart.
- <sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop,  
and I | shall be clean;\*  
wash me, and I shall be  
whit- | er than snow.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and | gladness;\*  
let the bones that you  
have bro- | ken rejoice.
- <sup>9</sup> Hide your face | from my sins,\*  
and blot out all my in- | iquities.
- <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, | O God,\*  
and renew a right spirit with- | in me.
- <sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from your | presence,\*  
and take not your Holy Spirit | from me.
- <sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your sal- | vation,\*  
and uphold me with a willing | spirit.
- <sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors | your ways,\*  
and sinners will re- | turn to you.  
—Psalm 51:5–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 12*

## Old Testament Reading: Malachi 1:1–14

<sup>1</sup>The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

The LORD'S LOVE for Israel

<sup>2</sup>“I have loved you,” says the LORD. But you say, “How have you loved us?” “Is not

Esau Jacob's brother?” declares the LORD. “Yet I have loved Jacob <sup>3</sup>but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert.” <sup>4</sup>If Edom says, “We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins,” the LORD of hosts says, “They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called ‘the wicked country,’ and ‘the people with whom the Lord is angry forever.’” <sup>5</sup>Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, “Great is the LORD beyond the border of Israel!”

The Priests' Polluted Offerings

<sup>6</sup>“A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ <sup>7</sup>By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the LORD's table may be despised. <sup>8</sup>When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup>And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts. <sup>10</sup>Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. <sup>11</sup>For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations,

says the LORD of hosts. <sup>12</sup>But you profane it when you say that the LORD's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. <sup>13</sup>But you say, 'What a weariness this is,' and you snort at it, says the LORD of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the LORD. <sup>14</sup>Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations."

**New Testament Reading: Matthew 3:1-17**

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

<sup>1</sup>In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup>"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." <sup>3</sup>For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.' "

<sup>4</sup>Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup>Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup>and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup>But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup>And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell

you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup>Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup>"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

The Baptism of Jesus

<sup>13</sup>Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup>John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" <sup>15</sup>But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. <sup>16</sup>And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; <sup>17</sup>and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

**Writing**

A person becomes righteous in the sight of God solely by faith. . . . Faith is demanded of us, not in order that there might be at least some little work that we are to do, as otherwise there would be no difference between those who go to hell and those go to heaven. No; righteousness is of faith in order that it may be of grace. Both statements are identical. When I

say: “A person becomes righteous in the sight of God by faith,” I mean to say: “He becomes righteous gratuitously, by grace, by God’s making righteousness a gift to him.” Nothing is demanded of the person; he is told: “Stretch out your hand, and you have it.” Just that is what faith is—reaching out the hand. Suppose a person had never heard a word concerning faith and, on being told the Gospel, would rejoice, accept it, put his confidence in it, and draw comfort from it, that person would have the true, genuine faith, although he may not have heard a word concerning faith.

—C. F. W. Walther

### Hymnody

To Jordan came the Christ, our Lord,  
To do His Father’s pleasure;  
Baptized by John, the Father’s Word  
Was given us to treasure.  
This heav’nly washing now shall be  
A cleansing from transgression  
And by His blood and agony  
Release from death’s oppression.  
A new life now awaits us.

—To Jordan Came the Christ,  
Our Lord (*LSB* 406:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L12)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIb (VI) 34–42 [131–139]

## 26 SEPTEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Preserve me, | O God,\*  
for in you I take | refuge.
- <sup>2</sup> I say to the LORD, “You | are my Lord;\*  
I have no good a- | part from you.”
- <sup>3</sup> As for the saints | in the land,\*  
they are the excellent ones,  
in whom is all | my delight.
- <sup>4</sup> The sorrows of those who run after another  
god shall | multiply;\*  
their drink offerings of blood I will not  
pour out or take their names | on my lips.
- <sup>5</sup> The LORD is my chosen portion | and  
my cup;\*  
you | hold my lot.
- <sup>6</sup> The lines have fallen for me  
in pleasant | places;\*  
indeed, I have a beautiful in- | heritance.
- <sup>7</sup> I bless the LORD who gives me | counsel;\*  
in the night also my heart in- | structs me.
- <sup>8</sup> I have set the LORD always be- | fore me;\*  
because he is at my right hand,  
I shall not be | shaken.
- <sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad,  
and my whole being re- | joices;\*  
my flesh also | dwells secure.
- <sup>10</sup> For you will not abandon  
my soul | to Sheol,\*  
or let your holy one see cor- | ruption.
- <sup>11</sup> You make known to me the | path of life;\*  
in your presence there is fullness of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures  
for- | evermore.

—Psalm 16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 32*

**Old Testament Reading: Malachi 2:1–3:5**

The Lord Rebukes the Priests

<sup>1</sup>“And now, O priests, this command is for you. <sup>2</sup>If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the LORD of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart. <sup>3</sup>Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it. <sup>4</sup>So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may stand, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>5</sup>My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name. <sup>6</sup>True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. <sup>7</sup>For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. <sup>8</sup>But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts, <sup>9</sup>and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction.”

Judah Profaned the Covenant

<sup>10</sup>Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless

to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers? <sup>11</sup>Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. <sup>12</sup>May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!

<sup>13</sup>And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD’s altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. <sup>14</sup>But you say, “Why does he not?” Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. <sup>15</sup>Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. <sup>16</sup>“For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”

The Messenger of the Lord

<sup>17</sup>You have wearied the LORD with your words. But you say, “How have we wearied him?” By saying, “Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them.” Or by asking, “Where is the God of justice?”

<sup>3:1</sup>“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says

the LORD of hosts. <sup>2</sup>But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. <sup>3</sup>He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

<sup>5</sup>"Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts."

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 4:1–11

The Temptation of Jesus

<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup>And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup>And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup>But he answered, "It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple <sup>6</sup>and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you,"

and

"On their hands they will bear you up,

lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

<sup>7</sup>Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

<sup>8</sup>Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup>And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

"You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."

<sup>11</sup>Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

### Writing

An exceedingly wonderful battle is explained to us in our Gospel today. Shortly before, when Christ was baptized, the heavens opened up above Him as if they wanted to descend upon the earth. Immediately after His baptism, hell opened up under Christ and rushed upon Him with all its power. How wonderful! The Son of God in almighty power had once cast Satan out of heaven, but here on earth, He let Himself be attacked by him, let Himself be led around, sneered at, and ridiculed. He did not conquer Satan, as He very well could have, by one word of His omnipotence, but by the written Word of God. He who is the eternal Light battled with the spirit of darkness, the eternal Truth with the spirit of lies, the Most Holy with the spirit of impurity, the King of heaven with the powerless prisoner of hell. The Son of God allowed Himself to be placed on the pinnacle of the temple and permitted the tempter

to demand that He worship him. What a wonderful battle! . . .

If Christ had not wanted it, Satan would not have appeared before Him, tempted Him, and attacked Him. But Christ here did not fight for Himself. Instead, He fought as surety, as a third party, as a substitute for the entire human race.

By sin, all people sold themselves to Satan, becoming servants and subjects of his kingdom. Therefore, when Christ wanted to redeem men and save them, He came, as the true owner of all people's souls, to conquer Satan, to destroy his kingdom, to remove his plunder from him, to free us from his dark power, and to lead us through the kingdom of grace into the kingdom of eternal glory. Christ did this mainly by His bloody death of atonement on the cross for all the sins of the world. By this, the head of the snake was totally crushed and all people were completely redeemed. The battle with Satan described in our text was the beginning. It was the first engagement that had to be fought by the Prince of our salvation to trample Satan under His feet and to deal the first deadly wounds to him. It was the first defeat the hellish army had to experience to show them that the Stronger One had now come.

—C. F. W. Walther

### Hymnody

If the way be drear,  
 If the foe be near,  
 Let not faithless fears o'ertake us;  
 Let not faith and hope forsake us;  
 For through many a woe  
 To our home we go.

—Jesus, Lead Thou On (LSB 718:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide the people of Your Church that following our Savior we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L23)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XIIb (VI) 43–50 [140–147]

## 27 SEPTEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>9</sup> Because you have made the LORD  
 your | dwelling place—\*  
 the Most High, who is my | refuge—
- <sup>10</sup> no evil shall be allowed to be- | fall you,\*  
 no plague come | near your tent.
- <sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels  
 con- | cerning you\*  
 to guard you in | all your ways.
- <sup>12</sup> On their hands they will | bear you up,\*  
 lest you strike your foot a- | gainst  
 a stone.
- <sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the | adder,\*  
 the young lion and the serpent you  
 will trample | underfoot.
- <sup>14</sup> “Because he holds fast to me in love,  
 I will de- | liver him;\*  
 I will protect him, because he | knows  
 my name.

<sup>15</sup>When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
I will be with him in | trouble;\*  
I will rescue him and | honor him.

<sup>16</sup>With long life I will sat- | isfy him\*  
and show him my sal- | vation.”  
—Psalm 91:9–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 91*

### Old Testament Reading: Malachi 3:6–4:6

Robbing God

<sup>6</sup>“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. <sup>7</sup>From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ <sup>8</sup>Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. <sup>9</sup>You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. <sup>10</sup>Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. <sup>11</sup>I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>12</sup>Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.

<sup>13</sup>“Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, ‘How have we spoken against you?’ <sup>14</sup>You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts?’ <sup>15</sup>And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers

not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.’”

The Book of Remembrance

<sup>16</sup>Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name. <sup>17</sup>“They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. <sup>18</sup>Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

The Great Day of the LORD

<sup>4:1</sup>“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. <sup>2</sup>But 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. <sup>3</sup>And 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.

<sup>4</sup>“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

<sup>5</sup>“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. <sup>6</sup>And 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.”

**New Testament Reading:**  
**Matthew 4:12–25**

Jesus Begins His Ministry

<sup>12</sup>Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. <sup>13</sup>And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup>so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

<sup>15</sup>“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—  
<sup>16</sup>the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light,  
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,  
on them a light has dawned.”

<sup>17</sup>From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

<sup>18</sup>While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup>And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” <sup>20</sup>Immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup>And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. <sup>22</sup>Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus Ministers to Great Crowds

<sup>23</sup>And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. <sup>24</sup>So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. <sup>25</sup>And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

**Writing**

[We do] well to note what class of people takes comfort in the thought of God. Surely not that perverse and crooked generation to whom it was said, “Woe unto you that are rich; for you have received your consolation” (Luke 6:24). Rather, those who can say with truth, “My soul refuses comfort” (Ps. 77:2). For it is meet that those who are not satisfied by the present should be sustained by the thought of the future, and that the contemplation of eternal happiness should solace those who scorn to drink from the river of transitory joys. . . .

In that day those who have not set their hearts aright will feel, too late, how easy is Christ’s yoke, to which they would not bend their necks and how light His burden, in comparison with the pains they must then endure. O wretched slaves of Mammon, you cannot glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ while you trust in treasures laid up on earth; you cannot taste and see how gracious the Lord is while you are hungering for gold. If you have not rejoiced at the thought of

His coming, that day will be indeed a day of wrath to you.

But the believing soul longs and faints for God; she rests sweetly in the contemplation of Him. She glories in the reproach of the cross, until the glory of His face shall be revealed. Like the Bride, the dove of Christ, that is covered with silver wings (Ps. 68:13), white with innocence and purity, she reposes in the thought of Your abundant kindness, Lord Jesus; and above all she longs for that day when in the joyful splendor of Your saints, gleaming with the radiance of the Beatific Vision, her feathers shall be like gold, resplendent with the joy of Your countenance.

—Bernard of Clairvaux

### Hymnody

The people that in darkness sat  
A glorious light have seen;  
The light has shined on them who long  
In shades of death have been,  
In shades of death have been.

—The People That in Darkness Sat  
(LSB 412:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L15)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIb (VI) 51–57 [148–154]

## 28 SEPTEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>17</sup>The LORD is righteous in | all his ways\*  
and kind in | all his works.
- <sup>18</sup>The LORD is near to all who | call on him,\*  
to all who call on | him in truth.
- <sup>19</sup>He fulfills the desire of those  
who | fear him;\*  
he also hears their cry and | saves them.
- <sup>20</sup>The LORD preserves all who | love him,\*  
but all the wicked he | will destroy.
- <sup>21</sup>My mouth will speak the praise | of  
the LORD,\*  
and let all flesh bless his holy name  
forever and | ever.
- Psalm 145:17–21

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 145*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 1:1–18

The Command to Leave Horeb

<sup>1</sup>These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazereth, and Dizahab. <sup>2</sup>It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea. <sup>3</sup>In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the people of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him in commandment to them, <sup>4</sup>after he had defeated Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth and in Edrei. <sup>5</sup>Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to explain this law, saying, <sup>6</sup>“The LORD our God said to us in Horeb, ‘You have stayed long enough at this mountain. <sup>7</sup>Turn and take your journey, and

go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill country and in the lowland and in the Negeb and by the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. <sup>8</sup>See, I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them.’

#### Leaders Appointed

<sup>9</sup>“At that time I said to you, ‘I am not able to bear you by myself. <sup>10</sup>The LORD your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are today as numerous as the stars of heaven. <sup>11</sup>May the LORD, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as you are and bless you, as he has promised you! <sup>12</sup>How can I bear by myself the weight and burden of you and your strife? <sup>13</sup>Choose for your tribes wise, understanding, and experienced men, and I will appoint them as your heads.’ <sup>14</sup>And you answered me, ‘The thing that you have spoken is good for us to do.’ <sup>15</sup>So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and set them as heads over you, commanders of thousands, commanders of hundreds, commanders of fifties, commanders of tens, and officers, throughout your tribes. <sup>16</sup>And I charged your judges at that time, ‘Hear the cases between your brothers, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the alien who is with him. <sup>17</sup>You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God’s. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.’ <sup>18</sup>And I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 5:1–20

#### The Sermon on the Mount

<sup>1</sup>Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

#### The Beatitudes

<sup>2</sup>And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup>“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup>“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup>“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup>“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup>“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

<sup>9</sup>“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup>“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, or theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup>“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

#### Salt and Light

<sup>13</sup>“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city

set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Christ Came to Fulfill the Law

<sup>17</sup>“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

<sup>18</sup>For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

<sup>19</sup>Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup>For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

## Writing

The cross . . . is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. . . . [T]he cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. . . . [I]t is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man . . . . [O]nly the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ. In fact, every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lusts. But we do not want to die, and therefore Jesus Christ and . . . the baptism in the name of [Christ] . . . means both death and life. . . . [B]aptism sets the Christian in

the middle of the daily arena against sin and the devil. . . . The wounds and scars he receives in the fray are living tokens of this participation in the cross of his Lord. . . . While it is true that only the sufferings of Christ are a means of atonement, yet since he has suffered for and borne the sins of the whole world and shares with his disciples the fruits of his passion, the Christian also has to . . . bear the sins of others . . . . But he would certainly break down under this burden, but for the support of him who bore the sins of all. The passion of Christ strengthens him to overcome the sins of others by forgiving them. He becomes the bearer of other men’s burdens—“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). As Christ bears our burdens, so ought we to bear the burdens of our fellow-men. The law of Christ . . . is the bearing of the cross. My brother’s burden which I must bear is not only his outward lot, his natural characteristics and gifts, but quite literally his sin. And the only way to bear that sin is by forgiving it in the power of the cross of Christ in which I now share. . . . Forgiveness is the Christlike suffering which it is the Christian’s duty to bear.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## Hymnody

“Blessed are the meek and humble,  
All the earth to them is willed.  
Those who hunger to be holy,  
They are bless’d and will be filled.  
Yes, the merciful are blessed,  
Mercy will to them be shown.  
And the pure in heart are blessed,  
They have eyes for God alone.”

—Jesus Sat with His Disciples  
(LSB 932:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You know we live in the midst of so many dangers that in our frailty we cannot stand upright. Grant strength and protection to support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L16)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIIb (VI) 58–66 [155–163]

## 29 SEPTEMBER

*St. Michael and All Angels*

## Psalmody

- <sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD is perfect,  
reviv- | ing the soul;\*  
the testimony of the LORD is sure,  
making wise the | simple;
- <sup>8</sup>the precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing | the heart;\*  
the commandment of the LORD is pure,  
enlightening | the eyes;
- <sup>9</sup>the fear of the LORD is clean,  
enduring for- | ever;\*  
the just decrees of the LORD are true,  
and righteous alto- | gether.
- <sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold,  
even | much fine gold;\*  
sweeter also than honey and drippings  
of the | honeycomb.
- <sup>11</sup>Moreover, by them is your | servant  
warned;\*  
in keeping them there is | great reward.

<sup>12</sup>Who can dis- | cern his errors?\*

Declare me innocent  
from | hidden faults.

<sup>13</sup>Keep back your servant also from  
presumptuous sins; let them not have  
dominion | over me!\*

Then I shall be blameless, and innocent  
of great trans- | gression.

<sup>14</sup>Let the words of my mouth and the  
meditation of my heart be acceptable | in  
your sight,\*

O LORD, my rock and my re- | deemer.  
—Psalm 19:7–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 34*

## Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 1:19–36

Israel's Refusal to Enter the Land

<sup>19</sup>“Then we set out from Horeb and went through all that great and terrifying wilderness that you saw, on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us. And we came to Kadesh-barnea. <sup>20</sup>And I said to you, ‘You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. <sup>21</sup>See, the LORD your God has set the land before you. Go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has told you. Do not fear or be dismayed.’ <sup>22</sup>Then all of you came near me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, that they may explore the land for us and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up and the cities into which we shall come.’ <sup>23</sup>The thing seemed good to me, and I took twelve men from you, one man from each tribe. <sup>24</sup>And they turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshcol and spied it out. <sup>25</sup>And they took in their hands some of the fruit

of the land and brought it down to us, and brought us word again and said, 'It is a good land that the LORD our God is giving us.'

<sup>26</sup>"Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. <sup>27</sup>And you murmured in your tents and said, 'Because the LORD hated us he has brought us out of the land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

<sup>28</sup>Where are we going up? Our brothers have made our hearts melt, saying, "The people are greater and taller than we. The cities are great and fortified up to heaven. And besides, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there."'

<sup>29</sup>Then I said to you, 'Do not be in dread or afraid of them. <sup>30</sup>The LORD your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, <sup>31</sup>and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all the way that you went until you came to this place.' <sup>32</sup>Yet in spite of this word you did not believe the LORD your God, <sup>33</sup>who went before you in the way to seek you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night and in the cloud by day, to show you by what way you should go.

The Penalty for Israel's Rebellion

<sup>34</sup>"And the LORD heard your words and was angered, and he swore, <sup>35</sup>"Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers, <sup>36</sup>except Caleb the son of Jephunneh. He shall see it, and to him and to his children I will give the land on which he has trodden, because he has wholly followed the LORD!"

## New Testament Reading: Matthew 5:21–48

Anger

<sup>21</sup>"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'

<sup>22</sup>But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. <sup>23</sup>So if you

are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

<sup>25</sup>Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. <sup>26</sup>Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Lust

<sup>27</sup>"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup>But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Divorce

<sup>31</sup>"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'

<sup>32</sup>But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual

immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

<sup>33</sup>“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ <sup>34</sup>But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, <sup>35</sup>or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup>And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup>Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

Retaliation

<sup>38</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ <sup>39</sup>But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. <sup>40</sup>And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. <sup>41</sup>And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. <sup>42</sup>Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Love Your Enemies

<sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers, what

more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Writing

Concerning the revelation of sin, Moses’ veil hangs [2 Corinthians 3:12–16] before the eyes of all people as long as they hear the bare preaching of the Law, and nothing about Christ. Therefore, they do not learn from the Law to see their sins correctly. They either become bold hypocrites <who swell with the opinion of their own righteousness> like the Pharisees [Matthew 23], or they despair like Judas [Matthew 27:3–5]. Therefore, Christ takes the Law into His hands and explains it spiritually (Matthew 5:21–48; Romans 7:14). In this way God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all sinners [Romans 1:18], so that they see how great it is. In this way they are directed back to the Law, and then they first learn from it to know their sins correctly—a knowledge that Moses never could have forced out of them.

According to this, the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ, the Son of God, is a serious and terrifying proclamation and declaration of God’s wrath. By such preaching people are first led into the Law correctly—after Moses’ veil has been removed from them. Then they understand correctly for the first time what great things God requires of us in His Law, none of which we can keep. Therefore, they know we are to seek all our righteousness in Christ.

. . . As long as all this (namely, Christ’s suffering and death) proclaims God’s wrath and terrifies a person, it is still not properly the preaching of the Gospel. It remains the preaching of Moses and the Law, and it is,

therefore, an alien work of Christ. Passing through this teaching, Christ arrives at His proper office, that is, to preach grace, console, and give life, which is properly the preaching of the Gospel.

—Epitome of the Formula of Concord  
V 8–10

What is the [angels'] attitude toward men? This the Lord Christ reveals with one word when He calls them “their angels,” that is, the angels of the little ones, the servants of the children and all believers. . . . They render this service to every Christian in manifold ways. While we are children, God assigns our angels to us, as Christ tells us in the holy gospel. When we grow older and go our own way, that is, walk in the ways of our calling, God also assigns angels to us (Ps. 91:11,12). When we sleep, the angels watch and protect us against the devil. When we die, they carry our soul to Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:22). Their protection is ours through life. . . . Why is that the angels readily serve the believers though they are much nobler and higher than we? (1) Because they are confirmed in the good and therefore gladly and fully obey God’s will. God’s will and order is that they serve us (Heb. 1:14). The army of the heavens—sun, moon, and stars—maintain their order given them by God for man’s sake. All the more will the heavenly army of the holy angels maintain its order. (2) Because our nature is raised in Christ above all angels and archangels (Eph. 1:20, 21; Heb. 1:4). Therefore the angels do not refuse to serve us men, in honor of the human nature assumed by Christ. As an entire race is brought to honor by a marriage, so the marriage of the Son of God with humanity has restored the human race to honor (Matt.

22:2). What wonder, then, that the angels serve us, since the Son of God, the Lord of the angels, came to earth that He might serve us? (3) Because love is pure and perfect in them, the angels joyfully serve us, as does the Lord, who Himself is Love (1 John 4:8), in whose image the angels were created, and who declared: “I will rejoice in doing them good” (Jer. 32:41). (4) Finally, because we shall someday be with them in heaven and join their choir in praising God, the angels are happy to serve us here on earth.

—Johann Gerhard

### Hymnody

“You shall not murder, hurt, nor hate;  
Your anger dare not dominate.  
Be kind and patient; help, defend,  
And treat your foe as your friend.”  
Have mercy, Lord!

—These Are the Holy Ten Commands  
(LSB 581:6)

### Prayer of the Day

Everlasting God, You have ordained and constituted the service of angels and men in a wonderful order. Mercifully grant that, as Your holy angels always serve and worship You in heaven, so by Your appointment they may also help and defend us here on earth; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F29)

### St. Michael and All Angels

The name of the archangel St. Michael means “Who is like God?” Michael is mentioned in the Book of Daniel (12:1), as well as in Jude (v. 9) and Revelation (12:7). Daniel portrays Michael as the angelic helper

of Israel who leads the battle against the forces of evil. In Revelation, Michael and his angels fight against and defeat Satan and the evil angels, driving them from heaven. Their victory is made possible by Christ's own victory over Satan in His death and resurrection, a victory announced by the voice in heaven: "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come" (Revelation 12:10). Michael is often associated with Gabriel and Raphael, the other chief angels or archangels who surround the throne of God. Tradition names Michael as the patron and protector of the Church, especially as the protector of Christians at the hour of death.

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XIIb (VI) 67–76 [164–173]

**30 SEPTEMBER**

*Jerome, Translator of Holy Scripture*

**Psalmody**

- 161 Princes persecute me with- | out cause,\*  
but my heart stands in awe | of your words.
- 162 I rejoice | at your word\*  
like one who | finds great spoil.
- 163 I hate and abhor | falsehood,\*  
but I | love your law.
- 164 Seven times a day I | praise you\*  
for your just and righ- | teous decrees.
- 165 Great peace have those who | love  
your law;\*

- nothing can make them | stumble.
  - 166 I hope for your salvation, | O LORD,\*  
and I do your com- | mandments.
  - 167 My soul keeps your testi- | monies;\*  
I love them ex- | ceedingly.
  - 168 I keep your precepts and testi- | monies,\*  
for all my ways are be- | fore you.
- Psalm 119:161–168

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 63*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Deuteronomy 1:37–2:15**

[The Penalty for Israel's Rebellion]

<sup>37</sup>Even with me the LORD was angry on your account and said, 'You also shall not go in there. <sup>38</sup>Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. <sup>39</sup>And as for your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who today have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there. And to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. <sup>40</sup>But as for you, turn, and journey into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea.'

<sup>41</sup>'Then you answered me, 'We have sinned against the LORD. We ourselves will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And every one of you fastened on his weapons of war and thought it easy to go up into the hill country. <sup>42</sup>And the LORD said to me, 'Say to them, Do not go up or fight, for I am not in your midst, lest you be defeated before your enemies.' <sup>43</sup>So I spoke to you, and you would not listen; but you rebelled against the command of the LORD and presumptuously went up into the hill country. <sup>44</sup>Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do and beat you down in

Seir as far as Hormah. <sup>45</sup>And you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD did not listen to your voice or give ear to you.

<sup>46</sup>So you remained at Kadesh many days, the days that you remained there.

#### The Wilderness Years

<sup>2:1</sup>“Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea, as the LORD told me. And for many days we traveled around Mount Seir. <sup>2</sup>Then the LORD said to me, <sup>3</sup>‘You have been traveling around this mountain country long enough. Turn northward <sup>4</sup>and command the people, ‘You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers, the people of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful. <sup>5</sup>Do not contend with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as for the sole of the foot to tread on, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. <sup>6</sup>You shall purchase food from them for money, that you may eat, and you shall also buy water of them for money, that you may drink. <sup>7</sup>For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing.’” <sup>8</sup>So we went on, away from our brothers, the people of Esau, who live in Seir, away from the Arabah road from Elath and Ezion-geber.

“And we turned and went in the direction of the wilderness of Moab. <sup>9</sup>And the LORD said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab or contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar to the people of Lot for a possession.’ <sup>10</sup>(The Emim formerly lived there, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim. <sup>11</sup>Like the Anakim

they are also counted as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim. <sup>12</sup>The Horites also lived in Seir formerly, but the people of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and settled in their place, as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the LORD gave to them.) <sup>13</sup>‘Now rise up and go over the brook Zered.’ So we went over the brook Zered. <sup>14</sup>And the time from our leaving Kadesh-barnea until we crossed the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until the entire generation, that is, the men of war, had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them. <sup>15</sup>For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the camp, until they had perished.”

#### New Testament Reading: Matthew 6:1–15

##### Giving to the Needy

<sup>1</sup>“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.

<sup>2</sup>“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. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

##### The Lord’s Prayer

<sup>5</sup>“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. <sup>6</sup>But 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.

<sup>7</sup>“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup>Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.

<sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth  
as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread,  
<sup>12</sup>and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup>And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

<sup>14</sup>For if you forgive others their trespasses,  
your heavenly Father will also forgive you,

<sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive others their  
trespasses, neither will your Father forgive  
your trespasses.”

## Writing

Today you may see women cramming their wardrobes with dresses, changing their gowns from day to day, and for all that unable to vanquish the moths. Now and then one more scrupulous wears out a single dress; yet, while she appears in rags, her boxes are full. Parchments are dyed purple, gold is melted into lettering, manuscripts are decked with jewels, while Christ lies at the door naked and dying. When they hold out a hand to the needy, they sound a trumpet; when they invite to a love-feast, they engage a crier. I lately saw the noblest lady in

Rome—I suppress her name, for I am no satirist—with a band of eunuchs before her in the basilica of the blessed Peter. She was giving money to the poor, a coin apiece; and this with her own hand, that she might be accounted more religious. Hereupon a by no means uncommon incident occurred. An old woman, “full of years and rags,” ran forward to get a second coin, but when her turn came she received not a penny but a blow hard enough to draw blood from her guilty veins.

“The love of money is the root of all evil,” and the apostle speaks of covetousness as being idolatry. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.” The Lord will never allow a righteous soul to perish of hunger.

—Jerome

## Hymnody

Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For His grace and pow’r are such  
None can ever ask too much.

—Come, My Soul, with Every Care  
(*LSB* 779:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, God of truth, Your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light on our path. You gave Your servant Jerome delight in his study of Holy Scripture. May those who continue to read, mark, and inwardly digest Your Word find in it the food of salvation and the fountain of life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1093)

## Jerome, Translator of Holy Scripture

Jerome was born in a little village on the Adriatic Sea around AD 345. At a young age, he went to study in Rome, where he was baptized. After extensive travels, he chose the life of a monk and spent five years in the Syrian Desert. There he learned Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament. After ordination at Antioch and visits to Rome and Constantinople, Jerome settled in Bethlehem. From the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, he used his ability with languages to translate the Bible into Latin, the common language of his time. This translation, called the Vulgate, was the authoritative version of the Bible in the Western Church for more than a thousand years. Considered one of the great scholars of the Early Church, Jerome died on September 30, 420. He was originally interred at Bethlehem, but his remains were eventually taken to Rome.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XIIb (VI) 77–81 [174–178]

## 1 OCTOBER

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Out | of the depths\*

I cry to you, | O LORD!

<sup>2</sup> O Lord, | hear my voice!\*

Let your ears be attentive to the voice  
of my pleas for | mercy!

<sup>3</sup> If you, O LORD, should mark in- | iquities,\*

O Lord, | who could stand?

<sup>4</sup> But with you there is for- | givenness,\*

that you | may be feared.

<sup>5</sup> I wait for the LORD, my | soul waits,\*  
and in his | word I hope;

<sup>6</sup> my soul waits for the Lord more than  
watchmen for the | morning,\*  
more than watchmen for the | morning.

<sup>7</sup> O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the  
LORD there is | steadfast love,\*  
and with him is plentiful re- | demption.

<sup>8</sup> And he will redeem | Israel\*  
from all his in- | iquities.

—Psalm 130

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 51*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 2:16–37

[The Wilderness Years]

<sup>16c</sup>So as soon as all the men of war had perished and were dead from among the people, <sup>17</sup>the LORD said to me, <sup>18c</sup>Today you are to cross the border of Moab at Ar. <sup>19</sup>And when you approach the territory of the people of Ammon, do not harass them or contend with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot for a possession.’ <sup>20</sup>(It is also counted as a land of Rephaim. Rephaim formerly lived there—but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim—<sup>21</sup>a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; but the LORD destroyed them before the Ammonites, and they dispossessed them and settled in their place, <sup>22</sup>as he did for the people of Esau, who live in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites before them and they dispossessed them and settled in their place even to this day. <sup>23</sup>As for the Avvim, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and settled in their place.) <sup>24c</sup>Rise up, set out on your

journey and go over the Valley of the Arnon. Behold, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to take possession, and contend with him in battle. <sup>25</sup>This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you on the peoples who are under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.’

#### The Defeat of King Sihon

<sup>26</sup>“So I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon the king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, <sup>27</sup>‘Let me pass through your land. I will go only by the road; I will turn aside neither to the right nor to the left. <sup>28</sup>You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink. Only let me pass through on foot, <sup>29</sup>as the sons of Esau who live in Seir and the Moabites who live in Ar did for me, until I go over the Jordan into the land that the LORD our God is giving to us.’ <sup>30</sup>But Sihon the king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that he might give him into your hand, as he is this day. <sup>31</sup>And the LORD said to me, ‘Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to take possession, that you may occupy his land.’ <sup>32</sup>Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Jahaz. <sup>33</sup>And the LORD our God gave him over to us, and we defeated him and his sons and all his people. <sup>34</sup>And we captured all his cities at that time and devoted to destruction every city, men, women, and children. We left no survivors. <sup>35</sup>Only the livestock we took as spoil for ourselves, with the plunder of the cities that we captured. <sup>36</sup>From Aroer, which

is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and from the city that is in the valley, as far as Gilead, there was not a city too high for us. The LORD our God gave all into our hands. <sup>37</sup>Only to the land of the sons of Ammon you did not draw near, that is, to all the banks of the river Jabbok and the cities of the hill country, whatever the LORD our God had forbidden us.”

#### New Testament Reading: Matthew 6:16–34

##### Fasting

<sup>16</sup>“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. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>that 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.

##### Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

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

<sup>22</sup>“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, <sup>23</sup>but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

<sup>24</sup>“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

## Do Not Be Anxious

<sup>25</sup>“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup>And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>28</sup>And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup>yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup>But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup>Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup>For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. <sup>33</sup>But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

<sup>34</sup>“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

## Writing

Just as you cannot make out of the gospel a sacrifice or a work, so you cannot make a sacrifice or a work out of this sacrament; for this sacrament is the gospel.

Therefore, in this matter no one can achieve anything for another person. Each one must believe for himself, just as I must believe all the Gospels for myself. I cannot

hear or believe or keep for any one else so much as a single letter of the gospel, even as I cannot be baptized for any one else. But a good work I can always do to another person and for another person. Indeed, I have to do them for somebody else or they are not good works. For example, I can pray for you, serve you, work for you, suffer for you, and so forth. There is a great difference between faith and good works, just as vast as the difference in value between the tree and the fruit. Fruits disappear and return each year, but the tree remains always. Faith also remains always, but works disappear. . . . Be careful, therefore, to stay on the track. Don't let anyone pull you away from the Word through any statement of man, be it Augustine, Jerome, Bernard, or even an angel [Gal. 1:8]. “The elect will be led astray,” says Christ [Matt. 24:24]. Therefore we cannot build on the mere word of one of the elect saints, without Scripture. Christ has warned us faithfully enough, and our own experience has probably taught us, that saintly men can make mistakes and have made mistakes. . . . No good work can free us of our sins or give us grace or life or salvation. But this sacrament does give life, grace, and blessedness, for it is a fountain of life and of blessedness.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

He who to this day has fed me  
And to many joys has led me  
Is and ever shall be mine.  
He who ever gently schools me,  
He who daily guides and rules me  
Will remain my help divine.

—All Depends on Our Possessing  
(LSB 732:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Eternal God, You counsel us not to be anxious about earthly things. Keep alive in us a proper yearning for those heavenly treasures awaiting all who trust in Your mercy, that we may daily rejoice in Your salvation and serve You with constant devotion; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A61)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIII (VII) 1–13

## 2 OCTOBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, how many | are my foes!\*
- Many are rising a- | gainst me;
- <sup>2</sup> many are saying | of my soul,\*
- there is no salvation for | him in God.
- <sup>3</sup> But you, O LORD, are a shield a- | bout me,\*
- my glory, and the lifter | of my head.
- <sup>4</sup> I cried aloud | to the LORD,\*
- and he answered me from his | holy hill.
- <sup>5</sup> I lay | down and slept;\*
- I woke again, for the LORD sus- | tained me.
- <sup>6</sup> I will not be afraid of many thousands  
of | people\*
- who have set themselves against  
me | all around.
- <sup>7</sup> Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God! For you  
strike all my enemies | on the cheek;\*
- you break the teeth of the | wicked.

<sup>8</sup> Salvation belongs | to the LORD;\*

your blessing be on your | people!

—Psalm 3

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 2*

## Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 3:1–29

The Defeat of King Og

<sup>1</sup>“Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan. And Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. <sup>2</sup>But the LORD said to me, ‘Do not fear him, for I have given him and all his people and his land into your hand. And you shall do to him as you did to Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon.’ <sup>3</sup>So the LORD our God gave into our hand Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people, and we struck him down until he had no survivor left. <sup>4</sup>And we took all his cities at that time—there was not a city that we did not take from them—sixty cities, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. <sup>5</sup>All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides very many unwalled villages. <sup>6</sup>And we devoted them to destruction, as we did to Sihon the king of Heshbon, devoting to destruction every city, men, women, and children. <sup>7</sup>But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as our plunder. <sup>8</sup>So we took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, from the Valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon <sup>9</sup>(the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, while the Amorites call it Senir), <sup>10</sup>all the cities of the tableland and all Gilead and all Bashan, as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. <sup>11</sup>(For only Og the king of Bashan was left of the remnant

of the Rephaim. Behold, his bed was a bed of iron. Is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the common cubit.)

<sup>12</sup>“When we took possession of this land at that time, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites the territory beginning at Aroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and half the hill country of Gilead with its cities. <sup>13</sup>The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, that is, all the region of Argob, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (All that portion of Bashan is called the land of Rephaim. <sup>14</sup>Jair the Manassite took all the region of Argob, that is, Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called the villages after his own name, Havvoth-jair, as it is to this day.) <sup>15</sup>To Machir I gave Gilead, <sup>16</sup>and to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave the territory from Gilead as far as the Valley of the Arnon, with the middle of the valley as a border, as far over as the river Jabbok, the border of the Ammonites; <sup>17</sup>the Arabah also, with the Jordan as the border, from Chinnereth as far as the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, under the slopes of Pisgah on the east.

<sup>18</sup>“And I commanded you at that time, saying, “The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. All your men of valor shall cross over armed before your brothers, the people of Israel. <sup>19</sup>Only your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall remain in the cities that I have given you, <sup>20</sup>until the LORD gives rest to your brothers, as to you, and they also occupy the land that the LORD your God gives them beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you.”<sup>21</sup> And I commanded

Joshua at that time, ‘Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings. So will the LORD do to all the kingdoms into which you are crossing. <sup>22</sup>You shall not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who fights for you.’

Moses Forbidden to Enter the Land

<sup>23</sup>“And I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, <sup>24</sup>O Lord GOD, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours? <sup>25</sup>Please let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.”<sup>26</sup> But the LORD was angry with me because of you and would not listen to me. And the LORD said to me, ‘Enough from you; do not speak to me of this matter again. <sup>27</sup>Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and look at it with your eyes, for you shall not go over this Jordan. <sup>28</sup>But charge Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, for he shall go over at the head of this people, and he shall put them in possession of the land that you shall see.’ <sup>29</sup>So we remained in the valley opposite Beth-peor.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 7:1–12

Judging Others

<sup>1</sup>“Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup>For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup>Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? <sup>4</sup>Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? <sup>5</sup>You hypocrite, first

take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

<sup>6</sup>“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Ask, and It Will Be Given

<sup>7</sup>“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. <sup>9</sup>Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup>Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? <sup>11</sup>If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

The Golden Rule

<sup>12</sup>“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

## Writing

If someone wants to describe adequately the usefulness of pious, earnest prayer, he will, in my opinion, surely find a beginning more easily than a conclusion. Pious prayer offered in faith is familiar conversation with God. It is a salutary remedy to all the difficulties of life. It is the key to heaven and the door to paradise. It shows us how much we depend on God, and it is a ladder of ascension to God. It is a shield for our defense and a faithful messenger of the ambassador. It is refreshment in the heat of misfortune; it is medicine during illness. It is a winch, drawing us to heaven, and a vessel

that draws water from the font of divine kindness. It is a sword against the devil and a defense against misfortune. It is a wind that blows away evil and brings earthly benefits. It is a nurse that nurtures virtues and conquers faults. It is a great fortification for the soul and gives free access to God. It is a spiritual feast and a heavenly delicacy. It is a consolation for the dejected and a delight for the holy. It grants knowledge of the secret things of God and acquires His gifts. It upholds the world and rescues people. It is a joy for the heart and a jubilation for the mind. It follows God's gift of grace, and it leads ahead into glory. It is a garden of happiness and a tree full of delights. It calms the conscience and increases our thankfulness. It sends demons running and draws angels close. It is a soothing remedy for the misfortunes of this life and the sweet smell of the sacrifice of thanksgiving. It is a foretaste of the life to come and sweetens the bitterness of death.

Whoever is truly a child of God through faith will, with childlike trust, address his or her heavenly Father every day in prayer. The one in whose heart the Holy Spirit has made His home will, as a spiritual priest, daily offer to God this incense of prayer. There are four immovable truths on which our confidence to pray rests. Because of these, we may be certain that our heavenly Father mercifully hears our prayers. The truths on which our certainty rests are: (1) God's omnipotent kindness; (2) God's unfailing truthfulness; (3) Christ's intercession as our mediator; and (4) the Holy Spirit's testimony.

—Johann Gerhard

## Hymnody

Forgive me, Lord, where I have erred  
 By loveless act and thoughtless word.  
 Make me to see the wrong I do  
 Will grieve my wounded Lord anew.  
 —Lord of All Nations, Grant Me  
 Grace (LSB 844:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful God, in Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, You give good gifts to Your children, the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Teach us to give the gift of love and mercy to our neighbors so that we may do unto others as we wish them to do unto us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1094)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XIII (VII) 14–23

## 3 OCTOBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>9</sup> How can a young man keep his | way pure?\*  
 By guarding it according | to your word.
- <sup>10</sup> With my whole heart I | seek you;\*  
 let me not wander from your  
 com- | mandments!
- <sup>11</sup> I have stored up your word | in my heart,\*  
 that I might not sin a- | gainst you.
- <sup>12</sup> Blessèd are you, | O LORD,\*  
 teach me your | statutes!
- <sup>13</sup> With my lips | I declare\*  
 all the just decrees | of your mouth.
- <sup>14</sup> In the way of your testimonies | I delight\*  
 as much as in all | riches.

<sup>15</sup> I will meditate on your | precepts\*  
 and fix my eyes | on your ways.

<sup>16</sup> I will delight in your | statutes;\*  
 I will not for- | get your word.  
 —Psalm 119:9–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 125*

## Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1–20

Moses Commands Obedience

<sup>1</sup>“And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. <sup>2</sup>You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. <sup>3</sup>Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal-peor, for the LORD your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Baal of Peor. <sup>4</sup>But you who held fast to the LORD your God are all alive today. <sup>5</sup>See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. <sup>6</sup>Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ <sup>7</sup>For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? <sup>8</sup>And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?  
<sup>9</sup>“Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart

from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children—<sup>10</sup>how on the day that you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.' <sup>11</sup>And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom. <sup>12</sup>Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice. <sup>13</sup>And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone. <sup>14</sup>And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and rules, that you might do them in the land that you are going over to possess.

#### Idolatry Forbidden

<sup>15</sup>"Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, <sup>16</sup>beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, <sup>17</sup>the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, <sup>18</sup>the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. <sup>19</sup>And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that

the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. <sup>20</sup>But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day."

#### New Testament Reading: Matthew 7:13–29

[The Golden Rule]

<sup>13</sup>"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. <sup>14</sup>For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

#### A Tree and Its Fruit

<sup>15</sup>"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup>You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup>So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup>A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup>Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup>Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

#### I Never Knew You

<sup>21</sup>"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' <sup>23</sup>And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

**Build Your House on the Rock**

<sup>24</sup>“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup>And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup>And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup>And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

**The Authority of Jesus**

<sup>28</sup>And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, <sup>29</sup>for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

**Writing**

A person may pretend to be a Christian while in reality he is not. As long as he is in this condition, he is quite content with his knowledge of the mere outlines of the Christian doctrines. . . . However, the moment a person becomes a Christian, there arises in him a keen desire for the doctrine of Christ. Even the most uncultured peasant who is still unconverted is suddenly roused in the moment of his conversion and begins to reflect on God and heaven, salvation and damnation, etc. He becomes occupied with the highest problems of human life.

An instance of this kind is afforded by those Jews who flocked to Christ and also by the apostles. Those multitudes heard Christ with great joy and were astonished because He preached with authority and not as did the scribes. But the majority of these hearers never advanced beyond a certain feeling of

delight and admiration. The apostles, too, were uneducated people, but they acted differently. They did not stop where the rest stopped, but propounded all manner of questions to Christ. . . . It is, therefore, quite true what the *Apology* says: “Men of good conscience are crying for the truth and proper instruction from the Word of God” . . . (Mueller, p.191; *Triglot Concordia*, p. 290).

—C. F. W. Walther

**Hymnody**

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
No merit of my own I claim  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

—My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less  
(*LSB* 575:1)

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord of all power and might, author and giver of all good things, instill in our hearts the love of Your name, impress on our minds the teachings of Your Word, and increase in our lives all that is holy and just; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A62)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XIV 24–28

4 OCTOBER

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
 you who lead Joseph | like a flock!\*  
 You who are enthroned upon the  
 cherubim, | shine forth.
- <sup>2</sup> Before Ephraim and Benjamin  
 and Ma- | nasseh,\*  
 stir up your might and come to | save us!
- <sup>3</sup> Restore us, | O God;\*  
 let your face shine, that we | may  
 be saved!
- <sup>4</sup> O LORD | God of hosts,\*  
 how long will you be angry  
 with your | people's prayers?
- <sup>5</sup> You have fed them with the | bread of tears\*  
 and given them tears to drink in  
 full | measure.
- <sup>6</sup> You make us an object of contention  
 for our | neighbors,\*  
 and our enemies laugh a- | mong  
 themselves.
- <sup>7</sup> Restore us, O | God of hosts;\*  
 let your face shine, that we | may be  
 saved!  
 —Psalm 80:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 80*

**Old Testament Reading:  
 Deuteronomy 4:21–40**

**Idolatry Forbidden**

<sup>21</sup>“Furthermore, the LORD was angry with me because of you, and he swore that I should not cross the Jordan, and that I should not enter the good land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance. <sup>22</sup>For I must die in this land; I must not go over the Jordan. But you shall go over and take possession of that good land. <sup>23</sup>Take

care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you.

<sup>24</sup>For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

<sup>25</sup>“When you father children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, so as to provoke him to anger, <sup>26</sup>I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed. <sup>27</sup>And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. <sup>28</sup>And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. <sup>29</sup>But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>30</sup>When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice. <sup>31</sup>For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.

**The LORD Alone Is God**

<sup>32</sup>“For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of. <sup>33</sup>Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the

midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? <sup>34</sup>Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? <sup>35</sup>To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him. <sup>36</sup>Out of heaven he let you hear his voice, that he might discipline you. And on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire. <sup>37</sup>And because he loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them and brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power, <sup>38</sup>driving out before you nations greater and mightier than yourselves, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is this day, <sup>39</sup>know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. <sup>40</sup>Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 8:1–17

#### Jesus Cleanses a Leper

<sup>1</sup>When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. <sup>2</sup>And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” <sup>3</sup>And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. <sup>4</sup>And Jesus said to him, “See that you say

nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”

#### The Faith of a Centurion

<sup>5</sup>When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” <sup>7</sup>And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” <sup>8</sup>But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup>For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” <sup>10</sup>When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. <sup>11</sup>I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, <sup>12</sup>while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” <sup>13</sup>And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.

#### Jesus Heals Many

<sup>14</sup>And when Jesus entered Peter’s house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. <sup>15</sup>He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him. <sup>16</sup>That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. <sup>17</sup>This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”

## Writing

I ask you to note how the centurion signified that Christ is able not only to overcome death as if it were a slave but is also able to command it as its master. For in saying, “‘Come,’ and he comes,” and “‘Go,’ and he goes,” the centurion express this: “If You should command my servant’s end not to come upon him, it will not come.”

Do you see how the centurion believed? For what was later to be made known to all—that Christ has power over both death and life, and that He leads down to the gates of hell and brings up again—is already made clear here by the centurion. . . . But nevertheless, though he has such great faith, he still accounted himself to be unworthy. Christ, however, signifying that the centurion was worthy to have Him enter into his house, did much greater things, marveling at him and acclaiming him and giving him more than he had asked. For he came indeed seeking for his servant bodily healing, but he went away, having received a kingdom. See how the saying had already been fulfilled, “Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added to you.” For because the centurion showed great faith and lowliness of mind, Christ both gave him heaven, and added to him the health of his servant.

And not by this alone did He honor him, but also by indicating upon whose casting out he is brought in. For now from this time forth, Christ proceeds to make known that salvation is by faith, not by works of the Law. And this is why not to Jews only, but to Gentiles also the gift so given shall be proffered, and to the [faithful of the] latter, rather than to the [unbelieving of the] former.

—John Chrysostom

## Hymnody

O be our great deliv’rer still,  
The Lord of life and death;  
Restore and quicken, soothe and bless,  
With Your life-giving breath.  
To hands that work and eyes that see  
Give wisdom’s healing pow’r  
That whole and sick and weak and strong  
May praise You evermore.

—Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old  
(LSB 846:3)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, grant to Your faithful people pardon and peace that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve You with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H80)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XV (VIII) 1–12

## 5 OCTOBER

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Incline your ear, O LORD, and | answer me,\*  
for I am poor and | needy.

<sup>2</sup> Preserve my life, for I am | godly;\*  
save your servant, who trusts in you—  
you | are my God.

<sup>3</sup> Be gracious to me, | O Lord,\*  
for to you do I cry | all the day.

<sup>4</sup> Gladden the soul of your | servant,\*  
for to you, O Lord, do I lift | up my soul.

<sup>5</sup> For you, O Lord, are good and for- | giving,\*

abounding in steadfast love  
to all who call up- | on you.

<sup>6</sup> Give ear, O LORD, | to my prayer;\*  
listen to my | plea for grace.

<sup>7</sup> In the day of my trouble I call up- | on you,\*  
for you | answer me.

<sup>8</sup> There is none like you among  
the gods, | O Lord,\*  
nor are there any | works like yours.

<sup>9</sup> All the nations you have made shall come  
and worship before you, | O Lord,\*  
and shall glori- | fy your name.

<sup>10</sup> For you are great and do | wondrous  
things,\*  
you a- | lone are God.  
—Psalm 86:1–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 86*

## Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 5:1–21

The Ten Commandments

<sup>1</sup>And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. <sup>2</sup>The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. <sup>3</sup>Not with our fathers did the LORD make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. <sup>4</sup>The LORD spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, <sup>5</sup>while I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD. For you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said:

<sup>6</sup>“ I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

<sup>7</sup>“ You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>8</sup>“ You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>9</sup>You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>10</sup>but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>11</sup>“ You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

<sup>12</sup>“ Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. <sup>13</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>14</sup>but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. <sup>15</sup>You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

<sup>16</sup>“ Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>17</sup>“ You shall not murder.

<sup>18</sup>“ And you shall not commit adultery.

<sup>19</sup>“ And you shall not steal.

<sup>20</sup>“And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>21</sup>“And you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

**New Testament Reading:  
Matthew 8:18–34**

The Cost of Following Jesus

<sup>18</sup>Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. <sup>19</sup>And a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” <sup>20</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” <sup>21</sup>Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” <sup>22</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.”

Jesus Calms a Storm

<sup>23</sup>And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. <sup>24</sup>And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. <sup>25</sup>And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.” <sup>26</sup>And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. <sup>27</sup>And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”

Jesus Heals Two Men with Demons

<sup>28</sup>And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the

tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. <sup>29</sup>And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” <sup>30</sup>Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. <sup>31</sup>And the demons begged him, saying, “If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs.” <sup>32</sup>And he said to them, “Go.” So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. <sup>33</sup>The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men. <sup>34</sup>And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

**Writing**

Until now consciences were plagued with [a false] doctrine of works. They did not hear consolation from the Gospel. Some people were driven by conscience into the desert and into monasteries, hoping to merit grace by a monastic life. Some people came up with other works to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins. That is why the need was so great for teaching and renewing the doctrine of faith in Christ, so that anxious consciences would not be without consolation but would know that grace, forgiveness of sins, and justification are received by faith in Christ.

People are also warned that the term *faith* does not mean simply a knowledge of a history, such as the ungodly and devil have [James 2:19]. Rather, it means a faith that believes, not merely the history, but also the effect of the history. In other words, it believes this article: the forgiveness of

sins. We have grace, righteousness, and forgiveness of sins through Christ.

The person who knows that he has a Father who is gracious to him through Christ truly knows God [John 14:7]. He also knows that God cares for him [1 Peter 5:7], and he calls upon God [Romans 10:13]. In a word, he is not without God, as are the heathen. For devils and the ungodly are not able to believe this article: the forgiveness of sins. Hence, they hate God as an enemy [Romans 8:7] and do not call Him [Romans 3:11–12] and expect no good from Him. Augustine also warns his readers about the word *faith* and teaches that the term is used in the Scriptures, not for the knowledge that is in the ungodly, but for the confidence that consoles and encourages the terrified mind.

—Augsburg Confession XX 19–26

### Hymnody

Ills that still grieve me  
 Soon are to leave me;  
 Though billows tower,  
 And winds gain power,  
 After the storm the fair sun shows its face.  
 Joys e'er increasing  
 And peace never ceasing:  
 These shall I treasure  
 And share in full measure  
 When in His mansions God grants  
 me a place.

—Evening and Morning (LSB 726:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, Creator and Redeemer, You have power over the demons and over all of creation so that even the winds and waves obey You. Give us faith to leave everything behind to follow You in the way of suffering

as You feed us along the way with Your very body and blood; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1095)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XV (VIII) 13–21

## 6 OCTOBER

### Psalmody

<sup>9</sup> Because you have made the LORD  
 your | dwelling place—\*

the Most High, who is my | refuge—

<sup>10</sup> no evil shall be allowed to be- | fall you,\*  
 no plague come | near your tent.

<sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels  
 con- | cerning you\*

to guard you in | all your ways.

<sup>12</sup> On their hands they will | bear you up,\*  
 lest you strike your foot a- | gainst  
 a stone.

<sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the | adder;\*  
 the young lion and the serpent  
 you will trample | underfoot.

<sup>14</sup> “Because he holds fast to me in love,  
 I will de- | liver him;\*

I will protect him, because he | knows  
 my name.

<sup>15</sup> When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
 I will be with him in | trouble;\*

I will rescue him and | honor him.

<sup>16</sup> With long life I will sat- | isfy him\*  
 and show him my sal- | vation.”

—Psalm 91:9–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 97*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Deuteronomy 5:22–6:9**

[The Ten Commandments]

<sup>22</sup>“These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. <sup>23</sup>And as soon as you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders. <sup>24</sup>And you said, ‘Behold, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man, and man still live. <sup>25</sup>Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, we shall die. <sup>26</sup>For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and has still lived? <sup>27</sup>Go near and hear all that the LORD our God will say and speak to us all that the LORD our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it.’

<sup>28</sup>“And the LORD heard your words, when you spoke to me. And the LORD said to me, ‘I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. <sup>29</sup>Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever! <sup>30</sup>Go and say to them, “Return to your tents.” <sup>31</sup>But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you the whole commandment and the statutes and the rules that you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land that I am giving them to possess.’ <sup>32</sup>You shall

be careful therefore to do as the LORD your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. <sup>33</sup>You shall walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess.

The Greatest Commandment

<sup>6:1</sup>“Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, <sup>2</sup>that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. <sup>3</sup>Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

<sup>4</sup>“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup>You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup>And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup>You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. <sup>8</sup>You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup>You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

**New Testament Reading: Matthew 9:1–17**

## Jesus Heals a Paralytic

<sup>1</sup>And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. <sup>2</sup>And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” <sup>3</sup>And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” <sup>4</sup>But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? <sup>5</sup>For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? <sup>6</sup>But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” <sup>7</sup>And he rose and went home. <sup>8</sup>When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

## Jesus Calls Matthew

<sup>9</sup>As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

<sup>10</sup>And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. <sup>11</sup>And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” <sup>12</sup>But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup>Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

## A Question About Fasting

<sup>14</sup>Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees

fast, but your disciples do not fast?” <sup>15</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. <sup>16</sup>No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. <sup>17</sup>Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”

**Writing**

The Lord’s Teaching to the Heathen  
by the Twelve Apostles:

There are two ways, one of life and one of death; and between the two ways there is a great difference.

Now, this is the way of life: “First, you must love God who made you, and second, your neighbor as yourself.” And whatever you want people to refrain from doing to you, you must not do to them.

What these maxims teach is this: “Bless those who curse you,” and “pray for your enemies.” Moreover, fast “for those who persecute you.” For “what credit is it to you if you love those who love you? Is that not the way the heathen act?” But “you must love those who hate you,” and then you will make no enemies. “Abstain from carnal passions.” If someone strikes you “on the right cheek, turn to him the other too, and you will be perfect.” If someone “forces you to go one mile with him, go along with him for two”; if someone robs you “of your overcoat, give him your suit as well.” If someone deprives you of “your property, do not ask for it back.” (You could not get it back anyway!) “Give to

everybody who begs from you, and ask for no return.” For the Father wants his own gifts to be universally shared. Happy is the man who gives as the commandment bids him, for he is guiltless!

—*Didache*

### Hymnody

We deserve but grief and shame,  
 Yet His words, rich grace revealing,  
 Pardon, peace, and life proclaim;  
 Here our ills have perfect healing.  
 Firmly in these words believe:  
 Jesus sinners doth receive.

—Jesus Sinners Doth Receive  
 (LSB 609:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and most merciful God, You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to seek and to save the lost. Graciously open our ears and our hearts to hear His call and to follow Him by faith that we may feast with Him forever in His kingdom; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A63)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XV (VIII) 22–30

## 7 OCTOBER

*Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Pastor*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>I lift up my eyes | to the hills.\*  
 From where does my | help come?

<sup>2</sup>My help comes | from the LORD,\*  
 who made | heaven and earth.

<sup>3</sup>He will not let your | foot be moved;\*  
 he who keeps you will not | slumber.

<sup>4</sup>Behold, he who keeps | Israel\*  
 will neither slum- | ber nor sleep.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD is your | keeper;\*  
 the LORD is your shade on  
 your | right hand.

<sup>6</sup>The sun shall not strike | you by day,\*  
 nor the | moon by night.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD will keep you from all | evil;\*  
 he will | keep your life.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD will keep your going out  
 and your | coming in\*  
 from this time forth and for- | evermore.

—Psalm 121

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 131*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 6:10–25

[The Greatest Commandment]

<sup>10</sup>“And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, <sup>11</sup>and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, <sup>12</sup>then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. <sup>13</sup>It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. <sup>14</sup>You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—  
<sup>15</sup>for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your

God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.

<sup>16</sup>“You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah. <sup>17</sup>You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded you. <sup>18</sup>And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers <sup>19</sup>by thrusting out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has promised.

<sup>20</sup>“When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the LORD our God has commanded you?’ <sup>21</sup>then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. <sup>22</sup>And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. <sup>23</sup>And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. <sup>24</sup>And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. <sup>25</sup>And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us.’ ”

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 9:18–38**

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

<sup>18</sup>While he was saying these things to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just

died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” <sup>19</sup>And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples. <sup>20</sup>And behold, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, <sup>21</sup>for she said to herself, “If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.” <sup>22</sup>Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well. <sup>23</sup>And when Jesus came to the ruler’s house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, <sup>24</sup>he said, “Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. <sup>25</sup>But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. <sup>26</sup>And the report of this went through all that district.

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

<sup>27</sup>And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, “Have mercy on us, Son of David.” <sup>28</sup>When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.” <sup>29</sup>Then he touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it done to you.” <sup>30</sup>And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, “See that no one knows about it.” <sup>31</sup>But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.

Jesus Heals a Man Unable to Speak

<sup>32</sup>As they were going away, behold, a demon-oppressed man who was mute was brought to him. <sup>33</sup>And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled, saying, “Never was anything like this seen in Israel.” <sup>34</sup>But the

Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.”

The Harvest Is Plentiful, the Laborers Few

<sup>35</sup>And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. <sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup>therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

### Writing

St. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians [1 Thess. 4:13–18] not to sorrow over the dead as others who have no hope, but to comfort each other with God’s Word as having a certain hope of life and of the resurrection of the dead.

It is little wonder if those are sad who have no hope. Nor can they be blamed for it. Since they are beyond the pale of faith in Christ, they must either cherish this temporal life as the only thing worthwhile and hate to lose it, or they must expect that after this life they will receive eternal death and the wrath of God in hell and must fear to go there.

But we Christians, who have been redeemed from all this by the dear blood of the Son of God, should by faith train and accustom ourselves to despise death and to regard it as a deep, strong, and sweet sleep, to regard the coffin as nothing but paradise and the bosom of our Lord Christ, and the grave as nothing but a soft couch or sofa, which it really is in the sight of God; for he says,

John 11[:11], “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep,” and Matthew 9[:24], “The girl is not dead but sleeping.”

Thus, too, St. Paul in I Corinthians 15[:42–44] bans from his sight every ugly aspect of death in our mortal body and brings to the fore a wholly delightful and joyous picture of life when he says: “What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. . . . It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

If thou but trust in God to guide thee  
And hope in Him through all thy ways,  
He’ll give thee strength, whate’er betide thee,  
And bear thee through the evil days.  
Who trusts in God’s unchanging love  
Builds on the rock that naught can move.

—If Thou But Trust in God to Guide  
Thee (*LSB* 750:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd of Your people, we give You thanks for Your servant Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, who was faithful in the care and nurture of the flock entrusted to his care. So they may follow his example and the teaching of his holy life, give strength to pastors today who shepherd Your flock so that, by Your grace, Your people may grow into the fullness of life intended for them in paradise; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1096)

## Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Pastor

Moving from the Old World to the New, Muhlenberg established the shape of Lutheran parishes for North America during a forty-five-year ministry in Pennsylvania. Born at Einbeck, Germany, in 1711, he came to the American colonies in 1742. A tireless traveler, Muhlenberg helped to found many Lutheran congregations and was the guiding force behind the first Lutheran synod in North America, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, founded in 1748. He valued the role of music in Lutheran worship (often serving as his own organist) and was also the guiding force in preparing the first American Lutheran liturgy (also in 1748). Muhlenberg is remembered as a church leader, a journalist, a liturgist, and—above all—a pastor to the congregation in his charge. He died in 1787, leaving behind a large extended family and a lasting heritage: American Lutheranism.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XV (VIII) 31–44

## 8 OCTOBER

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD restored the fortunes  
of | Zion,\*  
we were like | those who dream.

<sup>2</sup>Then our mouth was filled with | laughter,\*  
and our tongue with | shouts of joy;  
then they said among the nations, “The LORD  
has done great | things for them.”\*

<sup>3</sup>The LORD has done great things  
for us; | we are glad.

<sup>4</sup>Restore our fortunes, | O LORD,\*  
like streams in the | Negeb!

<sup>5</sup>Those who | sow in tears\*  
shall reap with | shouts of joy!

<sup>6</sup>He who goes out weeping,  
bearing the seed for | sowing,\*  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
bringing his | sheaves with him.

—Psalm 126

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 141*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 7:1–19

A Chosen People

<sup>1</sup>“When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than yourselves, <sup>2</sup>and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. <sup>3</sup>You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, <sup>4</sup>for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. <sup>5</sup>But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.

<sup>6</sup>“For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup>It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup>but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, <sup>10</sup>and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face. <sup>11</sup>You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today.

<sup>12</sup>“And because you listen to these rules and keep and do them, the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love that he swore to your fathers. <sup>13</sup>He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you. <sup>14</sup>You shall be blessed above all peoples. There shall not be male or female barren among you or among your livestock. <sup>15</sup>And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew, will he inflict on you, but he will lay them on all who hate you. <sup>16</sup>And you shall consume all the peoples that the LORD your

God will give over to you. Your eye shall not pity them, neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.

<sup>17</sup>“If you say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I. How can I dispossess them?’ <sup>18</sup>you shall not be afraid of them but you shall remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, <sup>19</sup>the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So will the Lord your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.”

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 10:1–23**

#### The Twelve Apostles

<sup>1</sup>And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. <sup>2</sup>The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; <sup>3</sup>Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup>Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

#### Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles

<sup>5</sup>These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup>but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ <sup>8</sup>Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. <sup>9</sup>Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, <sup>10</sup>no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a

staff, for the laborer deserves his food. <sup>11</sup>And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. <sup>12</sup>As you enter the house, greet it. <sup>13</sup>And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. <sup>14</sup>And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. <sup>15</sup>Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

#### Persecution Will Come

<sup>16</sup>“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. <sup>17</sup>Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, <sup>18</sup>and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. <sup>19</sup>When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. <sup>20</sup>For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. <sup>21</sup>Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, <sup>22</sup>and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>23</sup>When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

#### Writing

That you may know that the Spirit of God is the same as the Holy Spirit, as we read also in the apostle: “No one speaking in the

Spirit of God says anathema to Jesus; and no one can say, Lord Jesus, but in the Holy Spirit,” the apostle calls Him the Spirit of God. He called Him also the Spirit of Christ. . . . The same is, then, the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Christ. . . .

Receive now the saying of the Lord, that the same is the Holy Spirit Who is the Spirit of Truth, for you read in the end of [the Gospel of John]: “Receive the Holy Spirit.” And Peter teaches that the same is the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of the Lord when he says: “Ananias, why has it seemed good to you to tempt and to lie to the Holy Spirit?” . . . When he says “to you,” he shows that he is speaking of the same Spirit of whom he had spoken to Ananias. He Himself is, then, the Spirit of the Lord who is the Holy Spirit.

And the Lord Himself made clear that the same who is the Spirit of the Father is the Holy Spirit when, according to Matthew, He said that we should not think about what we should say in times of persecution: “For it is not you that speaks, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you.” Again He says according to St. Luke: “Be not anxious how you shall answer or speak, for the Holy Spirit of God shall teach you in that hour what you ought to say.” So, though many are called spirits, as it is said, “Who makes His angels spirits,” yet the Spirit of God is but one.

Both apostles and prophets received that one Spirit, as the vessel of election, the Doctor of the Gentiles, says: “For we have all drunk of one Spirit”—Him, as it were, who cannot be divided but is poured into souls and flows into the senses that He may quench the burning of this world’s thirst.

—Ambrose

## Hymnody

His strength within my weakness  
Will make me bold to say  
How His redeeming power  
Transforms my stubborn clay;  
His touch of fire ignites me,  
With courage I am sent,  
My tongue-tied silence broken,  
With grace made eloquent.

—On Galilee's High Mountain  
(LSB 835:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty, eternal God, in the Word of Your apostles and prophets You have proclaimed to us Your saving will. Grant us faith to believe Your promises that we may receive eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A64)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XV (VIII) 45–52

## 9 OCTOBER

*Abraham*

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Bless the LORD, | O my soul,\*  
and all that is within me, bless his | holy  
name!

<sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, | O my soul,\*  
and forget not all his | benefits,

<sup>3</sup> who forgives all your in- | iquity,\*  
who heals all your dis- | eases,

<sup>4</sup> who redeems your life | from the pit,\*  
who crowns you with steadfast love  
and | mercy,

<sup>5</sup> who satisfies | you with good\*  
so that your youth is renewed  
like the | eagle's.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD works | righteousness\*  
and justice for all who | are oppressed.

<sup>7</sup> He made known his ways to | Moses,\*  
his acts to the people of | Israel.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is merciful and | gracious,\*  
slow to anger and abounding  
in | steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup> He will not | always chide,\*  
nor will he keep his anger for- | ever.

<sup>10</sup> He does not deal with us according | to  
our sins,\*  
nor repay us according to  
our in- | iquities.

—Psalm 103:1–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 103*

## Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 8:1–20

Remember the LORD Your God

<sup>1</sup>“The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers. <sup>2</sup>And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. <sup>3</sup>And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives

by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. <sup>5</sup>Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you. <sup>6</sup>So you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. <sup>7</sup>For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, <sup>8</sup>a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, <sup>9</sup>a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. <sup>10</sup>And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

<sup>11</sup>“Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, <sup>12</sup>lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, <sup>13</sup>and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup>then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, <sup>15</sup>who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, <sup>16</sup>who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. <sup>17</sup>Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ <sup>18</sup>You shall remember the LORD your

God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. <sup>19</sup>And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. <sup>20</sup>Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 10:24–42

[Persecution Will Come]

<sup>24</sup>“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup>It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

Have No Fear

<sup>26</sup>“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. <sup>27</sup>What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. <sup>28</sup>And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. <sup>29</sup>Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. <sup>30</sup>But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup>Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. <sup>32</sup>So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, <sup>33</sup>but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Not Peace, but a Sword

<sup>34</sup>“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup>For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. <sup>36</sup>And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. <sup>37</sup>Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup>And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup>Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Rewards

<sup>40</sup>“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. <sup>41</sup>The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. <sup>42</sup>And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

Writing

All Holy Scripture is in agreement with this true service of God, which is indeed grounded in Holy Scripture. Therefore if you want to serve God, bear in mind that you must believe in Him whom the Father sent. If you want to know how to obtain God’s grace and how to approach God, how to render satisfaction for your sin, and how to escape death, then this is truly God’s will and true service, that you believe in Christ. The text deals with the work that we are to perform,

namely, to believe. Faith is a work that man must do, and yet it is also called the work of God; for this is the true existence, work, life, and merit with which God desires to be honored and served. If there is no faith, God accepts nothing as service rendered to Him. Here we have the answer to the question: What is the real service of God? It is the doctrine of faith in Christ. Later Christ tells us about the origin of faith—for no one possesses faith of himself—when He says (John 6:44): “No one can come to Me unless the Father draws him.” And again (John 6:65): “No one can believe in Me unless it is granted to him by the Father.” For faith is a divine work which God demands of us; but at the same time He Himself must implant it in us, for we cannot believe by ourselves.

—Martin Luther

Hymnody

Let us gladly die with Jesus.  
 Since by death He conquered death,  
 He will free us from destruction,  
 Give to us immortal breath.  
 Let us mortify all passion  
 That would lead us into sin;  
 And the grave that shuts us in  
 Shall but prove the gate to heaven.  
 Jesus, here with You I die,  
 There to live with You on high.

—Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus  
 (LSB 685:3)

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, You promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, You led him to the land of Canaan, and You sealed Your covenant with him by the shedding of blood.

May we see in Jesus, the Seed of Abraham, the promise of the new covenant of Your Holy Church, sealed with Jesus' blood on the cross and given to us now in the cup of the new testament; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1097)

### Abraham, Patriarch

Abraham (known early in his life as Abram) was called by God to become the father of a great nation (Genesis 12). At age seventy-five and in obedience to God's command, he, his wife, Sarah, and his nephew Lot moved southwest from the town of Haran to the land of Canaan. There God established a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:18), promising the land of Canaan to his descendants. When Abraham was one hundred and Sarah was ninety, they were blessed with Isaac, the son long promised to them by God. Abraham demonstrated supreme obedience when God commanded him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. God spared the young man's life only at the last moment and provided a ram as a substitute offering (Genesis 22:1–19). Abraham died at age 175 and was buried in the Cave of Machpelah, which he had purchased earlier as a burial site for Sarah. He is especially honored as the first of the three great Old Testament patriarchs—and for his righteousness before God through faith (Romans 4:1–12).

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XVI 53–60

## 10 OCTOBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for | he is good,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!
- <sup>2</sup> Who can utter the mighty deeds | of the LORD,\*  
or declare | all his praise?
- <sup>3</sup> Blessèd are they who observe | justice,\*  
who do righteousness | at all times!
- <sup>4</sup> Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your | people;\*  
help me when you | save them,
- <sup>5</sup> that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your | nation,\*  
that I may glory with your in- | heritance.
- <sup>6</sup> Both we and our fathers | have sinned,\*  
we have committed iniquity;  
we have done | wickedness.
- <sup>7</sup> Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your | wondrous works;\*  
they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the Sea, at the | Red Sea.
- <sup>8</sup> Yet he saved them for his | name's sake,\*  
that he might make known his | mighty power.
- <sup>9</sup> He rebuked the Red Sea,  
and it be- | came dry,\*  
and he led them through the deep as through a | desert.
- <sup>10</sup> So he saved them from the hand | of the foe\*  
and redeemed them from the power of the | enemy.
- <sup>11</sup> And the waters covered their adver- | saries;\*  
not one of | them was left.

<sup>12</sup>Then they believed his words;  
they sang his praise.  
—Psalm 106:1–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 106*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Deuteronomy 9:1–22**

Not Because of Righteousness

<sup>1</sup>“Hear, O Israel: you are to cross over the Jordan today, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves, cities great and fortified up to heaven, <sup>2</sup>a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you have heard it said, ‘Who can stand before the sons of Anak?’ <sup>3</sup>Know therefore today that he who goes over before you as a consuming fire is the LORD your God. He will destroy them and subdue them before you. So you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly, as the LORD has promised you.

<sup>4</sup>“Do not say in your heart, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, ‘It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,’ whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you. <sup>5</sup>Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

<sup>6</sup>“Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people. <sup>7</sup>Remember and

do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD. <sup>8</sup>Even at Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, and the LORD was so angry with you that he was ready to destroy you. <sup>9</sup>When I went up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the LORD made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. <sup>10</sup>And the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words that the LORD had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly. <sup>11</sup>And at the end of forty days and forty nights the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. <sup>12</sup>Then the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you have brought from Egypt have acted corruptly. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them; they have made themselves a metal image.’

The Golden Calf

<sup>13</sup>“Furthermore, the LORD said to me, ‘I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stubborn people. <sup>14</sup>Let me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven. And I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.’ <sup>15</sup>So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire. And the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands. <sup>16</sup>And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the LORD your God. You had made yourselves a golden calf. You had turned aside quickly from the way that

the LORD had commanded you. <sup>17</sup>So I took hold of the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes. <sup>18</sup>Then I lay prostrate before the LORD as before, forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all the sin that you had committed, in doing what was evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke him to anger. <sup>19</sup>For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the LORD bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me that time also. <sup>20</sup>And the LORD was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him. And I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. <sup>21</sup>Then I took the sinful thing, the calf that you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small, until it was as fine as dust. And I threw the dust of it into the brook that ran down from the mountain. <sup>22</sup>“At Taberah also, and at Massah and at Kibroth-hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 11:1–19

Messengers from John the Baptist

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

<sup>2</sup>Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” <sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

<sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. <sup>9</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is he of whom it is written,

“ ‘Behold, I send my messenger  
before your face,  
who will prepare your way  
before you.’

<sup>11</sup>Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

<sup>12</sup>From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup>For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, <sup>14</sup>and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup>He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

<sup>16</sup>“But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

<sup>17</sup>“ ‘We played the flute for you,  
and you did not dance;  
we sang a dirge,  
and you did not mourn.’

<sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ <sup>19</sup>The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

## Writing

To receive the forgiveness of sins is to be justified, according to Psalm 32:1, “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven.” By faith alone in Christ—not through love, not because of love or works—we receive the forgiveness of sins, although love follows faith. Therefore, by faith alone we are justified. We understand justification as the making of a righteous person out of an unrighteous one, or that a person is regenerated.

. . . In the forgiveness of sins, the terrors of sin and of eternal death must be overcome in the heart. Paul testifies about this in 1 Corinthians 15:56–57, “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” In other words, sin terrifies consciences. This happens through the Law, which shows God’s wrath against sin. But we gain the victory through Christ. How? Through faith, when we comfort ourselves by confidence in the mercy promised for Christ’s sake. . . . God’s wrath cannot be appeased if we set our own works against it. For Christ has been set forth as an Atoning Sacrifice so, that for His sake, the Father may be reconciled to us. But Christ is not received as a Mediator except by faith. Therefore, by faith alone we receive forgiveness of sins when we comfort our hearts with confidence in the mercy promised for Christ’s sake. Likewise, Paul says in Romans 5:2, “Through Him we have also obtained access” and adds, “by faith.” Therefore, we are reconciled to the Father and receive forgiveness of sins when we are comforted with confidence in the mercy promised for Christ’s sake. . . . [Paul] teaches that we have access to God (that is,

reconciliation) through Christ. To show how this happens, he adds that we have access by faith. By faith, for Christ’s sake, we receive forgiveness of sins. We cannot set up our own love and our own works against God’s wrath.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession IV (II) 76–81

## Hymnody

O grant, dear Lord of love,  
That we receive, rejoicing,  
The word proclaimed by John,  
Our true repentance voicing,  
That gladly we may walk  
Upon our Savior’s way  
Until we live with Him  
In His eternal day.

—When All the World Was Cursed  
(LSB 346:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, our heavenly Father,  
Your mercy attends us all our days. Be our  
strength and support amid the wearisome  
changes of this world, and at life’s end grant  
us Your promised rest and the full joys of  
Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your  
Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with  
You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
forever. (A67)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XVI 61–65, XVII 66

## 11 OCTOBER

*Philip the Deacon***Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my | shepherd;\*  
I | shall not want.

<sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green | pastures.\*  
He leads me beside still | waters.

<sup>3</sup>He re- | stores my soul.\*  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his | name's sake.

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

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the  
presence of my | enemies;\*  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup | overflows.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days | of my life,\*  
and I shall dwell in the house of the  
LORD for- | ever.

—Psalm 23

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 114*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Deuteronomy 9:23–10:22**

[The Golden Calf]

<sup>23</sup>“And when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, ‘Go up and take possession of the land that I have given you,’ then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God and did not believe him or obey his voice. <sup>24</sup>You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

<sup>25</sup>“So I lay prostrate before the Lord for these forty days and forty nights, because the LORD had said he would destroy you. <sup>26</sup>And I prayed to the LORD, ‘O Lord GOD, do not destroy your people and your heritage, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. <sup>27</sup>Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Do not regard the stubbornness of this people, or their wickedness or their sin, <sup>28</sup>lest the land from which you brought us say, ‘Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land that he promised them, and because he hated them, he has brought them out to put them to death in the wilderness.’ <sup>29</sup>For they are your people and your heritage, whom you brought out by your great power and by your outstretched arm.’

New Tablets of Stone

<sup>10:1</sup>“At that time the LORD said to me, ‘Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to me on the mountain and make an ark of wood. <sup>2</sup>And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets that you broke, and you shall put them in the ark.’ <sup>3</sup>So I made an ark of acacia wood, and cut two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. <sup>4</sup>And he wrote on the tablets, in the same writing as before, the Ten Commandments that the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly. And the LORD gave them to me. <sup>5</sup>Then I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tablets in the ark that I had made. And there they are, as the LORD commanded me.”

<sup>6</sup>(The people of Israel journeyed from Beeroth Bene-jaakan to Moserah. There

Aaron died, and there he was buried. And his son Eleazar ministered as priest in his place. <sup>7</sup>From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land with brooks of water. <sup>8</sup>At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD to stand before the LORD to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day. <sup>9</sup>Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers. The LORD is his inheritance, as the LORD your God said to him.)

<sup>10</sup>“I myself stayed on the mountain, as at the first time, forty days and forty nights, and the Lord listened to me that time also. The LORD was unwilling to destroy you. <sup>11</sup>And the LORD said to me, ‘Arise, go on your journey at the head of the people, so that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them.’

#### Circumcise Your Heart

<sup>12</sup>“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>13</sup>and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good? <sup>14</sup>Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. <sup>15</sup>Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. <sup>16</sup>Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. <sup>17</sup>For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. <sup>18</sup>He executes justice for the fatherless and

the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. <sup>19</sup>Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. <sup>20</sup>You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. <sup>21</sup>He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen. <sup>22</sup>Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven.”

#### New Testament Reading: Matthew 11:20–30

##### Woe to Unrepentant Cities

<sup>20</sup>Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. <sup>21</sup>“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup>But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>23</sup>And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. <sup>24</sup>But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.”

##### Come to Me, and I Will Give You Rest

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; <sup>26</sup>yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows

the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. <sup>28</sup>Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

## Writing

So long as we live in this world we cannot escape suffering and temptation. Whence it is written in Job: “The life of man upon earth is a warfare.” Everyone, therefore, must guard against temptation and must watch in prayer lest the devil, who never sleeps but goes about seeking whom he may devour, find occasion to deceive him. No one is so perfect or so holy but he is sometimes tempted; man cannot be altogether free from temptation.

Yet temptations, though troublesome and severe, are often useful to a man, for in them he is humbled, purified, and instructed. The saints all passed through many temptations and trials to profit by them, while those who could not resist became reprobate and fell away. There is no state so holy, no place so secret that temptations and trials will not come. Man is never safe from them as long as he lives, for they come from within us—in sin we were born. When one temptation or trial passes, another comes; we shall always have something to suffer because we have lost the state of original blessedness. . . .

The beginning of all temptation lies in a wavering mind and little trust in God, for as a rudderless ship is driven hither and yon by waves, so a careless and irresolute man is tempted in many ways. Fire tempers iron and temptation steels the just. Often we do

not know what we can stand, but temptation shows us what we are. . . .

We should not despair, therefore, when we are tempted, but pray to God the more fervently that He may see fit to help us, for according to the word of Paul, He will make issue with temptation that we may be able to bear it.

—Thomas Kempis

## Hymnody

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“Come unto Me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon My breast.”

I came to Jesus as I was,  
So weary, worn, and sad;  
I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad.

—I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say  
(*LSB* 699:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, we give thanks to You for Your servant Philip the Deacon. You called him to preach the Gospel to the peoples of Samaria and Ethiopia. Raise up in this and every land messengers of Your kingdom, that Your Church may proclaim the immeasurable riches of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. (1098)

## Philip, Deacon

Philip, also called the evangelist (Acts 21:8), was one of the seven men appointed to assist in the work of the twelve apostles and of the rapidly growing Early Church by overseeing the distribution of food to the poor (Acts 6:1–6). Following the martyrdom

of Stephen, Philip proclaimed the Gospel in Samaria and led Simon the Sorcerer to become a believer in Christ (Acts 8:4–13). He was also instrumental in bringing about the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–39), through whom Philip became indirectly responsible for bringing the Good News of Jesus to the people on the continent of Africa. In the town of Caesarea, he was host for several days to the apostle Paul, who stopped there on his last journey to Jerusalem (Acts 21:8–15).

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XVIII (67–76), XIX (77)

## 12 OCTOBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>97</sup> Oh how I | love your law!\*  
It is my meditation | all the day.
- <sup>98</sup> Your commandment makes me wiser than  
my | enemies,\*  
for it is ever | with me.
- <sup>99</sup> I have more understanding than  
all my | teachers,\*  
for your testimonies are my  
medi- | tation.
- <sup>100</sup> I understand more than the | aged,\*  
for I keep your | precepts.
- <sup>101</sup> I hold back my feet from every | evil way,\*  
in order to | keep your word.
- <sup>102</sup> I do not turn aside from your | just  
decrees,\*  
for you have | taught me.
- <sup>103</sup> How sweet are your words | to my taste,\*  
sweeter than honey | to my mouth!

- <sup>104</sup> Through your precepts I get  
under- | standing,\*  
therefore I hate every | false way.  
—Psalm 119:97–104

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 146*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 11:1–25

Love and Serve the LORD

<sup>1</sup>“You shall therefore love the LORD your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always. <sup>2</sup>And consider today (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it), consider the discipline of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm, <sup>3</sup>his signs and his deeds that he did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land, <sup>4</sup>and what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots, how he made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued after you, and how the LORD has destroyed them to this day, <sup>5</sup>and what he did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place, <sup>6</sup>and what he did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, son of Reuben, how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel. <sup>7</sup>For your eyes have seen all the great work of the LORD that he did.

<sup>8</sup>“You shall therefore keep the whole commandment that I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and take possession of the land that you are going over to possess, <sup>9</sup>and that you may live long in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give to them and to their offspring, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup>For the land

that you are entering to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated it, like a garden of vegetables. <sup>11</sup>But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, <sup>12</sup>a land that the LORD your God cares for. The eyes of the LORD your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

<sup>13</sup>“And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>14</sup>he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. <sup>15</sup>And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full. <sup>16</sup>Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; <sup>17</sup>then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you.

<sup>18</sup>“You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>19</sup>You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. <sup>20</sup>You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, <sup>21</sup>that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth. <sup>22</sup>For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I

command you to do, loving the LORD your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him, <sup>23</sup>then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will possess nations greater and mightier than yourselves. <sup>24</sup>Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours. Your territory shall be from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea. <sup>25</sup>No one shall be able to stand against you. The LORD your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you on all the land that you shall tread, as he promised you.”

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 12:1–21**

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

<sup>1</sup>At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. <sup>2</sup>But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.” <sup>3</sup>He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: <sup>4</sup>how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? <sup>5</sup>Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? <sup>6</sup>I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. <sup>7</sup>And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. <sup>8</sup>For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”

A Man with a Withered Hand

<sup>9</sup>He went on from there and entered their synagogue. <sup>10</sup>And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, “Is it

lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—so that they might accuse him. <sup>11</sup>He said to them, “Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? <sup>12</sup>Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” <sup>13</sup>Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. <sup>14</sup>But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

God’s Chosen Servant

<sup>15</sup>Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all <sup>16</sup>and ordered them not to make him known. <sup>17</sup>This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

<sup>18</sup>“Behold, my servant  
whom I have chosen,  
my beloved with whom  
my soul is well pleased.  
I will put my Spirit upon him,  
and he will proclaim justice  
to the Gentiles.  
<sup>19</sup>He will not quarrel or cry aloud,  
nor will anyone hear his voice  
in the streets;  
<sup>20</sup>a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smoldering wick  
he will not quench,  
until he brings justice to victory;  
<sup>21</sup>and in his name the Gentiles  
will hope.”

## Writing

You shall sanctify the holy day.

The word holiday is used for the Hebrew word sabbath, which properly means “to

rest,” that is, to cease from labor. . . . Now, in the Old Testament, God set apart the seventh day and appointed it for rest [Genesis 2:3]. He commanded that it should be regarded as holy above all other days. This commandment was given only to the Jewish people for this outward obedience, that they should stop toilsome work and rest. In that way both man and beast might recover and not be weakened by endless labor [Exodus 20:8–11]. Later, the Jewish people restricted the Sabbath too closely and greatly abused it. They defamed Christ and could not endure in Him the same works that they themselves would do on that day, as we read in the Gospel [Matthew 12:11]. They acted as though the commandment were fulfilled by doing no manual work whatsoever. This, however, was not the meaning. But, as we shall hear, they were supposed to sanctify the holy day or day of rest.

This commandment, therefore, in its literal sense, does not apply to us Christians. It is entirely an outward matter, like other ordinances of the Old Testament. The ordinances were attached to particular customs, persons, times, and places, but now they have been made matters of freedom through Christ [Colossians 2:16–17].

The simpleminded need to grasp a Christian meaning about what God requires in this commandment. . . . We keep [holy days] first of all for bodily causes and necessities, which nature teaches and requires. We keep them for the common people, manservants and maidservants, who have been attending to their work and trade the whole week. In this way they may withdraw in order to rest for a day and be refreshed.

Second, and most especially, on this day of rest (since we can get no other chance), we have the freedom and time to attend divine service. We come together to hear and use God's Word, and then to praise God, to sing and to pray [Colossians 3:16].

—Large Catechism I 78–84

### Hymnody

O God of mercy, God of might,  
In love and pity infinite,  
Teach us, as ever in Thy sight,  
To live our lives in Thee.

—O God of Mercy, God of Might  
(LSB 852:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord of the Sabbath, You gave Your servant David the bread of the Presence on the Sabbath to teach him that You desire mercy and not sacrifice. Be merciful to us by healing us from all our sins and diseases, that we may be merciful to others as You have been merciful to us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1099)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XX 78–85

**13 OCTOBER**

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my | whole heart,\* in the company of the upright, in the congre- | gation.

- <sup>2</sup> Great are the works | of the LORD,\* studied by all who de- | light in them.
- <sup>3</sup> Full of splendor and majesty | is his work,\* and his righteousness endures for- | ever.
- <sup>4</sup> He has caused his wondrous works to be re- | membered;\* the LORD is gracious and | merciful.
- <sup>5</sup> He provides food for those who | fear him;\* he remembers his covenant for- | ever.
- <sup>6</sup> He has shown his people the power | of his works,\* in giving them the inheritance of the | nations.
- <sup>7</sup> The works of his hands are faith- | ful and just;\* all his precepts are | trustworthy; they are established forever and | ever,\* to be performed with faithfulness and up- | rightness.
- <sup>9</sup> He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant for- | ever.\* Holy and awesome | is his name!
- <sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good under- | standing.\* His praise endures for- | ever!  
—Psalm 111

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 115*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 11:26–12:12

[Love and Serve the LORD]

<sup>26</sup>“See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: <sup>27</sup>the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, <sup>28</sup>and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.

<sup>29</sup>And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.

<sup>30</sup>Are they not beyond the Jordan, west of the road, toward the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oak of Moreh? <sup>31</sup>For you are to cross over the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you. And when you possess it and live in it, <sup>32</sup>you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the rules that I am setting before you today.

The LORD'S Chosen Place of Worship

<sup>12:16</sup>“These are the statutes and rules that you shall be careful to do in the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth. <sup>2</sup>You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. <sup>3</sup>You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place. <sup>4</sup>You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way. <sup>5</sup>But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go, <sup>6</sup>and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. <sup>7</sup>And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which the LORD your God has blessed you.

<sup>8</sup>“You shall not do according to all that we are doing here today, everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes, <sup>9</sup>for you have not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance that the LORD your God is giving you. <sup>10</sup>But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies around, so that you live in safety, <sup>11</sup>then to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, and all your finest vow offerings that you vow to the LORD. <sup>12</sup>And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male servants and your female servants, and the Levite that is within your towns, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 12:22–37

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

<sup>22</sup>Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. <sup>23</sup>And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” <sup>24</sup>But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.” <sup>25</sup>Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. <sup>26</sup>And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? <sup>27</sup>And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

<sup>28</sup>But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. <sup>29</sup>Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. <sup>30</sup>Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. <sup>31</sup>Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. <sup>32</sup>And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

A Tree Is Known by Its Fruit

<sup>33</sup>“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. <sup>34</sup>You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup>The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. <sup>36</sup>I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, <sup>37</sup>for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

## Writing

“If we cannot do anything, what is the point of so many laws, so many precepts, so many threatenings and promises?” Paul here replies: “Through the law comes knowledge of sin.” He replies to this question very differently from the way man or free choice thinks. He denies that free choice is proved by the law and cooperates with it to produce righteousness; for what comes through the

law is not righteousness but knowledge of sin. It is the task, function, and effect of the law to be a light to the ignorant and blind, but such a light as reveals sickness, sin, evil, death, hell, the wrath of God, though it affords no help and brings no deliverance from these, but is content to have revealed them. Then, when a man becomes aware of the disease of sin, he is troubled, distressed, even in despair. The law is no help, much less can he help himself. There is need of another light to reveal the remedy. This is the voice of the gospel, revealing Christ as the deliverer from all these things. It is not reason or free choice that reveals Christ; how should it when it is itself darkness and needs the light of the law to reveal its disease, which by its own light it does not see, but believes to be health? . . . When sins are unrecognized, there is no room for a remedy and no hope of a cure, because men will not submit to the touch of a healer when they imagine themselves well and in no need of a physician. Therefore, the law is necessary to make sin known so that when its gravity and magnitude are recognized, man in his pride who imagines himself well may be humbled and may sigh and gasp for the grace that is offered in Christ.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Though Satan's wrath  
Beset our path  
And worldly scorn assail us,  
While You are near,  
We shall not fear;  
Your strength will never fail us.  
Your rod and staff  
Will keep us safe

And guide our steps forever;  
Nor shades of death  
Nor hell beneath  
Our lives from You will sever.  
—Who Trusts in God a Strong Abode  
(LSB 714:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, the protector of all who trust in You, without whom nothing is strong and nothing is holy, multiply Your mercy on us that, with You as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H63)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XX 86–92

## 14 OCTOBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>When Israel went out from | Egypt,\*  
the house of Jacob from a people  
of strange | language,  
<sup>2</sup>Judah became his sanctu- | ary,\*  
Israel his do- | minion.  
<sup>3</sup>The sea | looked and fled;\*  
Jordan | turned back.  
<sup>4</sup>The mountains | skipped like rams,\*  
the | hills like lambs.  
<sup>5</sup>What ails you, O sea, | that you flee?\*O Jordan, that you | turn back?  
<sup>6</sup>O mountains, that you | skip like rams?\*O | hills, like lambs?

- <sup>7</sup>Tremble, O earth, at the presence | of  
the Lord,\*  
at the presence of the God of | Jacob,  
<sup>8</sup>who turns the rock into a pool of | water,\*  
the flint into a spring of | water.  
—Psalm 114

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 124*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 12:13–32

[The LORD'S Chosen Place of Worship]

<sup>13</sup>“Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place that you see, <sup>14</sup>but at the place that the LORD will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.

<sup>15</sup>“However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your towns, as much as you desire, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given you. The unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and as of the deer. <sup>16</sup>Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it out on the earth like water. <sup>17</sup>You may not eat within your towns the tithe of your grain or of your wine or of your oil, or the firstborn of your herd or of your flock, or any of your vow offerings that you vow, or your freewill offerings or the contribution that you present, <sup>18</sup>but you shall eat them before the LORD your God in the place that the LORD your God will choose, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who is within your towns. And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all that you undertake. <sup>19</sup>Take care that you do not neglect the Levite as long as you live in your land.

<sup>20</sup>“When the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he has promised you, and you say, ‘I will eat meat,’ because you crave meat, you may eat meat whenever you desire.

<sup>21</sup>If the place that the LORD your God will choose to put his name there is too far from you, then you may kill any of your herd or your flock, which the LORD has given you, as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your towns whenever you desire.

<sup>22</sup>Just as the gazelle or the deer is eaten, so you may eat of it. The unclean and the clean alike may eat of it. <sup>23</sup>Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh. <sup>24</sup>You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the earth like water. <sup>25</sup>You shall not eat it, that all may go well with you and with your children after you, when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD. <sup>26</sup>But the holy things that are due from you, and your vow offerings, you shall take, and you shall go to the place that the LORD will choose, <sup>27</sup>and offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God. The blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, but the flesh you may eat. <sup>28</sup>Be careful to obey all these words that I command you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

#### Warning Against Idolatry

<sup>29</sup>“When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, <sup>30</sup>take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, ‘How

did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do the same.’ <sup>31</sup>You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

<sup>32</sup>“Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 12:38–50

#### The Sign of Jonah

<sup>38</sup>Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” <sup>39</sup>But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup>For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup>The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. <sup>42</sup>The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

#### Return of an Unclean Spirit

<sup>43</sup>“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. <sup>44</sup>Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. <sup>45</sup>Then it goes and

brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

Jesus’ Mother and Brothers

<sup>46</sup>While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. <sup>48</sup>But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” <sup>49</sup>And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! <sup>50</sup>For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

## Writing

As far as the old Adam is concerned, which still clings to [believers], he must be driven not only by the Law, but also by punishments. Nevertheless, he does everything against his will and under coercion, no less than the godless are driven and held in obedience by the Law’s threats (1 Corinthians 9:27; Romans 7:18–19).

This doctrine of the Law is needed by believers in order that they may not make up a holiness and devotion of their own. Using God’s Spirit as an excuse, they must not set up a self-chosen worship, without God’s Word and command. For it is written:

“You shall not do according to . . . Whatever is right in [your] own eyes,” but “be careful to obey all these words that I command you,” “you shall not add to it or take from it.” (Deuteronomy 12:8, 28, 32)

The doctrine of the Law is also necessary in and with <the use of> believers’ good works. Otherwise, a person can easily imagine that his work and life are entirely pure and perfect. But God’s Law prescribes good works to believers in this way: it shows and indicates at the same time, as in a mirror, that in this life works are still imperfect and impure in us. So we must say with the beloved Paul, “I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted” [1 Corinthians 4:4]. So Paul, when encouraging the regenerate to do good works, clearly presents to them the Ten Commandments (Romans 13:9). He recognizes from the Law that his good works are imperfect and impure (Romans 7:7–13). And David declares:

I will run in the way of Your commandments. (Psalm 119:32)

[But] enter not into judgment with Your servant, for no one living is righteous before You. (Psalm 143:2)

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VI 19–21

## Hymnody

For us He prayed; for us He taught;  
For us His daily works He wrought,  
By words and signs and actions thus  
Still seeking not Himself but us.

—O Love, How Deep (LSB 544:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the

blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A68)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXI (IX) 1–13

15 OCTOBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>33</sup> Teach me, O LORD, the way  
of your | statutes;\*  
and I will keep it | to the end.
- <sup>34</sup> Give me understanding,  
that I may | keep your law\*  
and observe it with my | whole heart.
- <sup>35</sup> Lead me in the path  
of your com- | mandments,\*  
for I de- | light in it.
- <sup>36</sup> Incline my heart to your testi- | monies,\*  
and not to | selfish gain!
- <sup>37</sup> Turn my eyes from looking at | worthless  
things,\*  
and give me life | in your ways.
- <sup>38</sup> Confirm to your servant your | promise,\*  
that you | may be feared.
- <sup>39</sup> Turn away the reproach | that I dread,\*  
for your just de- | crees are good.
- <sup>40</sup> Behold, I long for your | precepts,\*  
in your righteousness | give me life!  
—Psalm 119:33–40

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 34:8–18*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 13:1–18

<sup>1</sup>“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, <sup>2</sup>and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ <sup>3</sup>you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>4</sup>You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him.

<sup>5</sup>But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

<sup>6</sup>“If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which neither you nor your fathers have known, <sup>7</sup>some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, <sup>8</sup>you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him. <sup>9</sup>But you shall kill him. Your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. <sup>10</sup>You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the LORD your God, who brought

you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. <sup>11</sup>And all Israel shall hear and fear and never again do any such wickedness as this among you.

<sup>12</sup>“If you hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God is giving you to dwell there, <sup>13</sup>that certain worthless fellows have gone out among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which you have not known, <sup>14</sup>then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently. And behold, if it be true and certain that such an abomination has been done among you, <sup>15</sup>you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, devoting it to destruction, all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword. <sup>16</sup>You shall gather all its spoil into the midst of its open square and burn the city and all its spoil with fire, as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever. It shall not be built again. <sup>17</sup>None of the devoted things shall stick to your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger and show you mercy and have compassion on you and multiply you, as he swore to your fathers, <sup>18</sup>if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, keeping all his commandments that I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the LORD your God.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 13:1–23

#### The Parable of the Sower

<sup>1</sup>That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup>And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And he told them

many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, <sup>6</sup>but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>He who has ears, let him hear.”

#### The Purpose of the Parables

<sup>10</sup>Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” <sup>11</sup>And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup>For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>13</sup>This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup>Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

“ ‘You will indeed hear but never understand,

and you will indeed see but never perceive.

<sup>15</sup>For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart

and turn, and I would heal them.’

<sup>16</sup>But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. <sup>17</sup>For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

<sup>18</sup>“Hear then the parable of the sower: <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup>yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>23</sup>As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

## Writing

Let me tell you this, even though you know God’s Word perfectly and are already a master in all things: you are daily in the devil’s kingdom [Colossians 1:13–14]. He ceases neither day nor night to sneak up on you and to kindle in your heart unbelief and wicked thoughts against these [first] three commandments and all the commandments. Therefore, you must always have God’s Word in your heart, upon your lips, and in your ears. But where the heart is idle and

the Word does not make a sound, the devil breaks in and has done the damage before we are aware [Matthew 13:24–30]. On the other hand, the Word is so effective that whenever it is seriously contemplated, heard, and used, it is bound never to be without fruit [Isaiah 55:11; Mark 4:20]. It always awakens new understanding, pleasure, and devoutness and produces a pure heart and pure thoughts [Philippians 4:8]. For these words are not lazy or dead, but are creative, living words [Hebrews 4:12]. And even though no other interest or necessity moves us, this truth ought to urge everyone to the Word, because thereby the devil is put to flight and driven away [James 4:7]. Besides, this commandment is fulfilled and this exercise in the Word is more pleasing to God than any work of hypocrisy, however brilliant.

—Large Catechism I 100–102

## Hymnody

Almighty Father, bless the Word  
Which through Your grace we  
now have heard.

Oh, may the precious seed take root,  
Spring up, and bear abundant fruit!

—Almighty Father, Bless the Word  
(LSB 923:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your final judgment, we may be stirred up to holiness of living here and dwell with You in perfect joy hereafter; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A69)

**Suggested Reading from  
the Book of Concord**

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXI (IX) 14–20

**16 OCTOBER**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>3</sup>Trust in the LORD, | and do good;\*  
    dwell in the land and  
    befriend | faithfulness.
- <sup>4</sup>Delight yourself | in the LORD,\*  
    and he will give you  
    the desires | of your heart.
- <sup>5</sup>Commit your way | to the LORD;\*  
    trust in him, and | he will act.
- <sup>6</sup>He will bring forth your  
righteousness | as the light,\*  
    and your justice as the | noonday.
- <sup>7</sup>Be still before the LORD  
and wait patiently | for him;\*  
    fret not yourself over the one who  
    prosper in his way, over the man  
    who carries out evil de- | vices!
- <sup>8</sup>Refrain from anger, and for- | sake wrath!\*
- Fret not yourself; it tends only to | evil.
- <sup>9</sup>For the evildoers shall be | cut off,\*  
    but those who wait for the LORD  
    shall inher- | it the land.
- <sup>10</sup>In just a little while, the wicked  
will | be no more;\*  
    though you look carefully at his place,  
    he will | not be there.
- <sup>11</sup>But the meek shall in- | herit the land\*  
    and delight themselves  
    in a- | bundant peace.  
    —Psalm 37:3–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 37*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Deuteronomy 14:1–2, 22–23; 14:28–15:15**

Clean and Unclean Food

<sup>1</sup>“You are the sons of the LORD your God. You shall not cut yourselves or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead. <sup>2</sup>For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. . . .

Tithes

<sup>22</sup>“You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. <sup>23</sup>And before the LORD your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. . . .

<sup>28</sup>“At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. <sup>29</sup>And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

The Sabbatical Year

<sup>15:1</sup>“At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release. <sup>2</sup>And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release what he has lent to his neighbor. He shall not exact it of his neighbor, his brother, because the LORD’s release has been proclaimed. <sup>3</sup>Of a foreigner you may exact it, but whatever of yours is with your brother your hand shall release. <sup>4</sup>But there will be no poor among you; for the LORD will bless you in the land that the

LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess—<sup>5</sup>if only you will strictly obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all this commandment that I command you today. <sup>6</sup>For the LORD your God will bless you, as he promised you, and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow, and you shall rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over you.

<sup>7</sup>“If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, <sup>8</sup>but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. <sup>9</sup>Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, ‘The seventh year, the year of release is near,’ and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the LORD against you, and you be guilty of sin. <sup>10</sup>You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. <sup>11</sup>For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’

<sup>12</sup>“If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. <sup>13</sup>And when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty-handed. <sup>14</sup>You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress. As the LORD your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. <sup>15</sup>You shall remember that

you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today.”

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 13:24–43**

The Parable of the Weeds

<sup>24</sup>He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, <sup>25</sup>but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. <sup>26</sup>So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. <sup>27</sup>And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ <sup>28</sup>He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ <sup>29</sup>But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup>Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

<sup>31</sup>He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. <sup>32</sup>It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

<sup>33</sup>He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”

Prophecy and Parables

<sup>34</sup>All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. <sup>35</sup>This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables;  
I will utter what has been hidden  
since the foundation of the world.”

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

<sup>36</sup>Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” <sup>37</sup>He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup>The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, <sup>39</sup>and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup>Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, <sup>42</sup>and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

Writing

The hidden meaning of the firstlings can be understood from the hidden meaning of the slaughtered first-born in Egypt. The first-born, I think, denote the first fruit of the Law, that is, the righteousness of works. For the Law first forces to works and when taken in the fleshly sense produces brilliant hypocrites, who imagine themselves to be the first of all, and to whom everything is

due. This righteousness Christ killed by His passing-through (Heb. 10:20), that is, His death, by which He taught that before God no flesh is justified by the works of the Law (Rom. 3:20, 28). But the first-born of Israel, sanctified to God, is the righteousness of faith, which is altogether due to Him who has condemned the righteousness of works. Therefore to offer up the first-born and the firstlings is to confess that the righteousness of faith is accepted by His grace, not wrought by our powers. For the first fruit of the Gospel is faith in the spirit, which also makes us first-born and establishes us by double right as heirs of the kingdom and of the priesthood. The tithes, however, like the subsequent fruit, are the very good things of love and the spirit which we offer up and pay when we confess that they are given to us by grace through faith, not received because of our merits.

—Martin Luther

Hymnody

Even so, Lord, quickly come  
To Thy final harvest home;  
Gather Thou Thy people in,  
Free from sorrow, free from sin,  
There, forever purified,  
In Thy garner to abide:  
Come with all Thine angels, come,  
Raise the glorious harvest home.

—Come, Ye Thankful People, Come  
(LSB 892:4)

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, give us an increase of faith, hope, and love, that, receiving what You have promised, we may love what You have commanded; through

Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A70)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXI (IX) 21–30

## 17 OCTOBER

*Ignatius of Antioch, Pastor and Martyr*

### Psalmody

<sup>4</sup>“O LORD, make me know my end  
and what is the measure | of my days;\*  
let me know how fleeting | I am!

<sup>5</sup>Behold, you have made my days  
a few | handbreadths,\*  
and my lifetime is as nothing  
be- | fore you.

Surely all mankind stands  
as a | mere breath!\*

<sup>6</sup> Surely a man goes about as a | shadow!  
Surely for nothing they are in | turmoil;\*  
man heaps up wealth and does not  
know who will | gather!

<sup>7</sup>“And now, O Lord, for what | do I wait?\*"
   
My hope | is in you.

<sup>12</sup>“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to  
my cry; hold not your peace | at my tears!\*"
   
For I am a sojourner with you,  
a guest, like all my | fathers.

<sup>13</sup>Look away from me,  
that I may | smile again,\*  
before I depart and | am no more!"
   
—Psalm 39:4–7, 12–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 38*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 15:19–16:22

[The Sabbatical Year]

<sup>19</sup>“All the firstborn males that are born of your herd and flock you shall dedicate to the LORD your God. You shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. <sup>20</sup>You shall eat it, you and your household, before the LORD your God year by year at the place that the LORD will choose. <sup>21</sup>But if it has any blemish, if it is lame or blind or has any serious blemish whatever, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. <sup>22</sup>You shall eat it within your towns. The unclean and the clean alike may eat it, as though it were a gazelle or a deer. <sup>23</sup>Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it out on the ground like water.

Passover

<sup>16:1</sup>“Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. <sup>2</sup>And you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the LORD your God, from the flock or the herd, at the place that the LORD will choose, to make his name dwell there.” <sup>3</sup>You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste—that all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. <sup>4</sup>No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the flesh that you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain all night until morning. <sup>5</sup>You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, <sup>6</sup>but at the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it, there you shall

offer the Passover sacrifice, in the evening at sunset, at the time you came out of Egypt. <sup>7</sup>And you shall cook it and eat it at the place that the LORD your God will choose. And in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. <sup>8</sup>For six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD your God. You shall do no work on it.

#### The Feast of Weeks

<sup>9</sup>“You shall count seven weeks. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain. <sup>10</sup>Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you. <sup>11</sup>And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your towns, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there. <sup>12</sup>You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

#### The Feast of Booths

<sup>13</sup>“You shall keep the Feast of Booths seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your winepress. <sup>14</sup>You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns. <sup>15</sup>For seven days you shall keep the feast to the LORD your God at the place that the LORD will choose, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all

the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.

<sup>16</sup>“Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. <sup>17</sup>Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given you.

#### Justice

<sup>18</sup>“You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. <sup>19</sup>You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. <sup>20</sup>Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

#### Forbidden Forms of Worship

<sup>21</sup>“You shall not plant any tree as an Asherah beside the altar of the LORD your God that you shall make. <sup>22</sup>And you shall not set up a pillar, which the LORD your God hates.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 13:44–58

#### The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

<sup>44</sup>“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

#### The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value

<sup>45</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup>who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

### The Parable of the Net

<sup>47</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. <sup>48</sup>When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. <sup>49</sup>So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup>and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

### New and Old Treasures

<sup>51</sup>“Have you understood all these things?” They said to him, “Yes.” <sup>52</sup>And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

### Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

<sup>53</sup>And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, <sup>54</sup>and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? <sup>55</sup>Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? <sup>56</sup>And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” <sup>57</sup>And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.” <sup>58</sup>And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

### Writing

If, then, those who were conversant with the ancient Scriptures came to newness of hope, expecting the coming of Christ, as the

Lord teaches us when He says, “If you had believed Moses, you would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me”; and again, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad; for before Abraham was, I am”; how shall we be able to live without Him? The prophets were His servants and foresaw Him by the Spirit and waited for Him as their teacher and expected Him as their Lord and Savior, saying, “He will come and save us.” Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner . . . but let us keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation on [the Word of God] . . . Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord’s Day, the resurrection day, as a festival. For it is the queen and chief of all the days of the week. Looking forward to this, the prophet declared, “To the end, for the eighth day,” on which our life both sprang up again and the victory over death was obtained in Christ.

—Ignatius of Antioch

### Hymnody

For the Lord, our God, shall come  
And shall take His harvest home,  
From His field shall in that day  
All offenses purge away,  
Give His angels charge at last  
In the fire the tares to cast,  
But the fruitful ears to store  
In His garner evermore.

—Come, Ye Thankful People, Come  
(*LSB* 892:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, we praise Your name for Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr. He offered himself as grain to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts so that he might present

to You the pure bread of sacrifice. Accept the willing tribute of all that we are and all that we have, and give us a portion in the pure and unspotted offering of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1100)

### Ignatius of Antioch, Pastor and Martyr

Ignatius was the bishop of Antioch in Syria at the beginning of the second century AD and an early Christian martyr. Near the end of the reign of the Roman Emperor Trajan (AD 98–117), Ignatius was arrested, taken in chains to Rome, and eventually thrown to the wild beasts in the arena. On the way to Rome, he wrote letters to the Christians at Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna, as well as to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. In the letters, which are beautifully pastoral in tone, Ignatius warned against certain heresies (false teachings). He also repeatedly stressed the full humanity and deity of Christ, the reality of Christ's bodily presence in the Lord's Supper, the supreme authority of the bishop, and the unity of the Church found in her bishops. Ignatius was the first to use the word *catholic* to describe the universality of the Church. His Christ-centeredness, his courage in the face of martyrdom, and his zeal for the truth over against false doctrine are a lasting legacy to the Church.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXI (IX) 31–37

## 18 OCTOBER

*St. Luke, Evangelist*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your | name is near.\*  
We recount your | wondrous deeds.
  - <sup>2</sup> “At the set time that | I appoint\*  
I will judge with | equity.
  - <sup>3</sup> When the earth totters, and all its  
in- | habitants,\*  
it is I who keep steady its | pillars.
  - <sup>4</sup> I say to the boastful, | ‘Do not boast,’\*  
and to the wicked, ‘Do not lift | up  
your horn;
  - <sup>5</sup> do not lift up your | horn on high,\*  
or speak with | haughty neck.’ ”
  - <sup>6</sup> For not from the east or | from the west\*  
and not from the wilderness  
comes | lifting up,
  - <sup>7</sup> but it is God who executes | judgment,\*  
putting down one and lifting  
up an- | other.
  - <sup>8</sup> For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup  
with foaming wine, well mixed, and he  
pours | out from it,\*  
and all the wicked of the earth | shall  
drain it down | to the dregs.
  - <sup>9</sup> But I will declare it for- | ever;\*  
I will sing praises to the God of | Jacob.
  - <sup>10</sup> All the horns of the wicked I will | cut off,\*  
but the horns of the righteous  
shall be | lifted up.
- Psalm 75

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 77*

## Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 17:1–20

[Forbidden Forms of Worship]

<sup>1</sup>“You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep in which is a blemish, any defect whatever, for that is an abomination to the LORD your God.

<sup>2</sup>“If there is found among you, within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, a man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing his covenant, <sup>3</sup>and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden, <sup>4</sup>and it is told you and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently, and if it is true and certain that such an abomination has been done in Israel, <sup>5</sup>then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has done this evil thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death with stones. <sup>6</sup>On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. <sup>7</sup>The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

Legal Decisions by Priests and Judges

<sup>8</sup>“If any case arises requiring decision between one kind of homicide and another, one kind of legal right and another, or one kind of assault and another, any case within your towns that is too difficult for you, then you shall arise and go up to the place that the LORD your God will choose. <sup>9</sup>And you shall come to the Levitical priests and to the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall consult them, and they shall declare to you

the decision. <sup>10</sup>Then you shall do according to what they declare to you from that place that the LORD will choose. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they direct you. <sup>11</sup>According to the instructions that they give you, and according to the decision which they pronounce to you, you shall do. You shall not turn aside from the verdict that they declare to you, either to the right hand or to the left. <sup>12</sup>The man who acts presumptuously by not obeying the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall purge the evil from Israel. <sup>13</sup>And all the people shall hear and fear and not act presumptuously again.

Laws Concerning Israel’s Kings

<sup>14</sup>“When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,’ <sup>15</sup>you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. <sup>16</sup>Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall never return that way again.’ <sup>17</sup>And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.

<sup>18</sup>“And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. <sup>19</sup>And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by

keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, <sup>20</sup>that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.”

**New Testament Reading:  
Matthew 14:1–21**

The Death of John the Baptist

<sup>1</sup>At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus, <sup>2</sup>and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.” <sup>3</sup>For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, <sup>4</sup>because John had been saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.” <sup>5</sup>And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet. <sup>6</sup>But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod, <sup>7</sup>so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. <sup>8</sup>Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.” <sup>9</sup>And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given. <sup>10</sup>He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, <sup>11</sup>and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. <sup>12</sup>And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

<sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate

place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup>When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. <sup>15</sup>Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” <sup>16</sup>But Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” <sup>17</sup>They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” <sup>18</sup>And he said, “Bring them here to me.” <sup>19</sup>Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. <sup>21</sup>And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

**Writing**

Theologians are rightly familiar with distinguishing between a Sacrament and a sacrifice. Therefore, let them be subdivided into either a ceremony or a sacred work. A Sacrament is a ceremony or work in which God presents to us what the promise of the ceremony offers. Baptism is not a work that we offer to God. It is a work in which God baptizes us. In other words, a minister baptizes us on God’s behalf. God here offers and presents the forgiveness of sins, and so forth, according to the promise “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16). A sacrifice, on the contrary, is a ceremony or work that we give to God in order to provide Him honor.

Furthermore, there are two kinds of sacrifice and no more. One is the atoning sacrifice, that is, a work that makes satisfaction for guilt and punishment. It reconciles God, or reconciles His wrath and merits the forgiveness of sins for others. The other kind is the eucharistic sacrifice, which does not merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation. It is practiced by those who have been reconciled, so that we may give thanks or return gratitude for the forgiveness of sins that has been received, or for other benefits received.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession XXIV (XII) 17–19

### Hymnody

For that belov'd physician  
All praise, whose Gospel shows  
The Healer of the nations,  
The one who shares our woes.  
Your wine and oil, O Savior,  
Upon our spirits pour,  
And with true balm of Gilead  
Anoint us evermore.

—By All Your Saints in Warfare  
(*LSB* 518:26)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, our Father, Your blessed Son called Luke the physician to be an evangelist and physician of the soul. Grant that the healing medicine of the Gospel and the Sacraments may put to flight the diseases of our souls that with willing hearts we may ever love and serve You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F30)

### St. Luke, Evangelist

St. Luke, the beloved physician referred to by St. Paul (Colossians 4:14), presents us with Jesus, whose blood provides the medicine of immortality. As his traveling companion, Paul claimed Luke's Gospel as his own for its healing of souls (Eusebius). Luke traveled with Paul during the second missionary journey, joining him after Paul received his Macedonian call to bring the Gospel to Europe (Acts 16:10–17). Luke most likely stayed behind in Philippi for seven years, rejoining Paul at the end of the third missionary journey in Macedonia. He traveled with Paul to Troas, Jerusalem, and Caesarea, where Paul was imprisoned for two years (Acts 20:5–21:18). While in Caesarea, Luke may have researched material that he used in his Gospel. Afterward, Luke accompanied Paul on his journey to Rome (Acts 27:1–28:16). Especially beloved in Luke's Gospel are the stories of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29–37), the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32), the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31), and the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9–14). Only Luke provides a detailed account of Christ's birth (Luke 2:1–20) and the canticles of Mary (Luke 1:46–55), of Zechariah (Luke 1:68–79), and of Simeon (Luke 2:29–32). To show how Christ continued His work in the Early Church through the apostles, Luke also penned the Acts of the Apostles. More than one-third of the New Testament comes from the hand of the evangelist Luke.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXI (IX) 38–44

19 OCTOBER

**Psalmody**

<sup>14</sup>Turn again, O | God of hosts!\*  
 Look down from | heaven, and see;  
 have regard for this vine, <sup>15</sup>the stock that  
 your right hand | planted,\*  
 and for the son whom you  
 made strong | for yourself.

<sup>16</sup>They have burned it with fire;  
 they have | cut it down;\*  
 may they perish at the rebuke | of  
 your face!

<sup>17</sup>But let your hand be on the man  
 of your | right hand,\*  
 the son of man whom you have made  
 strong | for yourself!

<sup>18</sup>Then we shall not turn | back from you;\*  
 give us life, and we will  
 call up- | on your name!

<sup>19</sup>Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts!\*  
 let your face shine,  
 that we | may be saved!  
 —Psalm 80:14–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 80*

**Old Testament Reading:  
 Deuteronomy 18:1–22**

Provision for Priests and Levites

<sup>1</sup>“The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the LORD’s food offerings as their inheritance. <sup>2</sup>They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them. <sup>3</sup>And this shall be the priests’ due from the people, from those offering a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach. <sup>4</sup>The firstfruits of your

grain, of your wine and of your oil, and the first fleece of your sheep, you shall give him. <sup>5</sup>For the LORD your God has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for all time.

<sup>6</sup>“And if a Levite comes from any of your towns out of all Israel, where he lives—and he may come when he desires—to the place that the LORD will choose, <sup>7</sup>and ministers in the name of the LORD his God, like all his fellow Levites who stand to minister there before the LORD, <sup>8</sup>then he may have equal portions to eat, besides what he receives from the sale of his patrimony.

Abominable Practices

<sup>9</sup>“When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. <sup>10</sup>There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer <sup>11</sup>or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, <sup>12</sup>for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you. <sup>13</sup>You shall be blameless before the Lord your God, <sup>14</sup>for these nations, which you are about to dispossess, listen to fortune-tellers and to diviners. But as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do this.

A New Prophet like Moses

<sup>15</sup>“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—<sup>16</sup>just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly,

when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’<sup>17</sup> And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken.<sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.<sup>19</sup> And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.<sup>20</sup> But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.’<sup>21</sup> And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?’—<sup>22</sup>when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 14:22–36

Jesus Walks on the Water

<sup>22</sup>Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.<sup>23</sup> And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,<sup>24</sup> but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.<sup>25</sup> And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.<sup>26</sup> But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear.<sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

<sup>28</sup>And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”<sup>29</sup> He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.<sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.”<sup>31</sup> Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”<sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.<sup>33</sup> And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret

<sup>34</sup>And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.<sup>35</sup> And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent around to all that region and brought to him all who were sick<sup>36</sup> and implored him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

### Writing

What can be set forth to us that is more useful and more suitable for consolation than the example of Peter? He advances on the water to meet Christ. And when he stepped out of the boat, he first walked on the water to come to Jesus. As the evangelist says, he ran with great impetuosity, with heroic and special spirit, because he knew that Christ was there; and he had the Word and the promise of the Word for his petition: “If it be Thou, bid me come to Thee on the water” (Matt. 14:28). But soon, when a little wind blows, he wavers and sinks. What now? Where is that great spirit? Why did you doubt? But it pleased Christ that he should be tried in this way. For if he had not been

tried, he would have been puffed up. But it is better to be tried than to be puffed up. For in this way the promises are retained, and in this way we learn to understand those sobs of the saints, as in Ps. 6:1: “O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy anger.” For David, too, was such a great man that God gave him the testimony: “I have found in David, the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will” (Acts 13:22; cf. 1 Sam. 13:14). Yet he prays in this way and struggles with the trials of unbelief and despair.

In this way we, too, have been called, and we have promises that are much clearer and more glorious than those the fathers had. Thus Peter praises this good fortune of ours when he says (2 Peter 1:19): “And we have the prophetic Word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place.” Grace and eternal life have been promised and offered to us in a much more glorious way than to them. For the Son has come, and all the promises have been fulfilled. We hear the Son Himself; we have the sacraments and absolution; and day and night the Gospel proclaims to us: “You are holy. You are holy. Your sins have been forgiven you. You are blessed, etc.” But what do we do? We still tremble, and we cling to our weakness throughout our life. But why are we not aroused by the example of the patriarchs, who believed to complete perfection? I reply that they, too, were weak, just as we are, although we have richer promises than they had. But it comes to pass as God’s voice says to Paul: “My power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9). For God could not retain and fulfill His promises in us if He did not kill that stupid, proud, and smug flesh in us.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

O Christ, whose voice the waters heard  
And hushed their raging at Thy word,  
Who walkedst on the foaming deep  
And calm amid its rage didst sleep:  
O hear us when we cry to Thee  
For those in peril on the sea.

—Eternal Father, Strong to Save  
(LSB 717:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and most merciful God,  
preserve us from all harm and danger that  
we, being ready in both body and soul, may  
cheerfully accomplish what You want done;  
through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy  
Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A72)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXII (X) 1–8

## 20 OCTOBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> I give you thanks, O LORD,  
with | my whole heart;\*  
before the gods I | sing your praise;
- <sup>2</sup> I bow down toward your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name for your  
steadfast love and your | faithfulness,\*  
for you have exalted above all things  
your name | and your word.
- <sup>3</sup> On the day I called, you | answered me;\*  
my strength of soul | you increased.
- <sup>4</sup> All the kings of the earth shall give you  
thanks, | O LORD,\*

for they have heard the words | of  
your mouth,  
<sup>5</sup>and they shall sing of the ways | of  
the LORD,\*  
for great is the glory | of the LORD.  
<sup>6</sup>For though the LORD is high,  
he regards the | lowly,\*  
but the haughty he knows | from afar.  
<sup>7</sup>Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
you pre- | serve my life;\*  
you stretch out your hand against the  
wrath of my enemies, and your right  
hand de- | livers me.  
<sup>8</sup>The LORD will fulfill his pur- | pose for me;\*  
your steadfast love, O LORD, endures  
forever. Do not forsake the work | of  
your hands.  
—Psalm 138

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 140*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 19:1–20

Laws Concerning Cities of Refuge

<sup>1</sup>“When the LORD your God cuts off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, <sup>2</sup>you shall set apart three cities for yourselves in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess. <sup>3</sup>You shall measure the distances and divide into three parts the area of the land that the LORD your God gives you as a possession, so that any manslayer can flee to them.

<sup>4</sup>“This is the provision for the manslayer, who by fleeing there may save his life. If anyone kills his neighbor unintentionally without having hated him in the past—<sup>5</sup>as when someone goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and his hand swings

the axe to cut down a tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—he may flee to one of these cities and live, <sup>6</sup>lest the avenger of blood in hot anger pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and strike him fatally, though the man did not deserve to die, since he had not hated his neighbor in the past. <sup>7</sup>Therefore I command you, You shall set apart three cities. <sup>8</sup>And if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he has sworn to your fathers, and gives you all the land that he promised to give to your fathers—<sup>9</sup>provided you are careful to keep all this commandment, which I command you today, by loving the LORD your God and by walking ever in his ways—then you shall add three other cities to these three, <sup>10</sup>lest innocent blood be shed in your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance, and so the guilt of bloodshed be upon you.

<sup>11</sup>“But if anyone hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him and attacks him and strikes him fatally so that he dies, and he flees into one of these cities, <sup>12</sup>then the elders of his city shall send and take him from there, and hand him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die. <sup>13</sup>Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, so that it may be well with you.

Property Boundaries

<sup>14</sup>“You shall not move your neighbor’s landmark, which the men of old have set, in the inheritance that you will hold in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

Laws Concerning Witnesses

<sup>15</sup>“A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. <sup>16</sup>If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, <sup>17</sup>then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. <sup>18</sup>The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, <sup>19</sup>then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. <sup>20</sup>And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you.”

**New Testament Reading:  
Matthew 15:1–20**

Traditions and Commandments

<sup>1</sup>Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, <sup>2</sup>“Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” <sup>3</sup>He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? <sup>4</sup>For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ <sup>5</sup>But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, “What you would have gained from me is given to God,” <sup>6</sup>he need not honor his father.’ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. <sup>7</sup>You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

<sup>8</sup>“ This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;

<sup>9</sup>in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”

What Defiles a Person

<sup>10</sup>And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: <sup>11</sup>it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.” <sup>12</sup>Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” <sup>13</sup>He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. <sup>14</sup>Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.” <sup>15</sup>But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.” <sup>16</sup>And he said, “Are you also still without understanding? <sup>17</sup>Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? <sup>18</sup>But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. <sup>19</sup>For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. <sup>20</sup>These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

**Writing**

Our churches have taught that we cannot merit grace or be justified by observing human traditions. We must not think that such observances are necessary acts of worship. Here we add testimonies of Scripture. Christ defends the Apostles who had not observed the usual tradition (Matthew 15:3). This had to do with a matter that was not unlawful, but rather, neither commanded or forbidden. It was similar

to the purifications of the Law. He said in Matthew 15:9, “In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” Therefore, He does not require a useless human service. Shortly after, He adds, “It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person” (Matthew 15:11). So also Paul, in Romans 14:17, “The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,” and in Colossians 2:16, “Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to . . . a Sabbath.” And again, “If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—‘Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch’ ” [Colossians 2:20–21]. Peter says, “Why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will” (Acts 15:10–11). Here Peter forbids burdening consciences with many rites, either from Moses or others. In 1 Timothy 4:1–3 Paul calls the prohibition of meats a teaching of demons. It is contrary to the Gospel to institute or do such works thinking that we merit grace through them, or as though Christianity could not exist without such service of God.

—Augsburg Confession XXVI 21–29

## Hymnody

Create in me a new heart, Lord,  
That gladly I obey Your Word.  
Let what You will be my desire,  
And with new life my soul inspire.

—Renew Me, O Eternal Light  
(LSB 704:3)

## Prayer of the Day

We pray You, O Lord, to keep our tongues from evil and our lips from speaking deceit, that as Your holy angels continuously sing praises to You in heaven, so may we at all times glorify You on earth; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (210)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXII (X) 9–17

## 21 OCTOBER

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> With my voice I cry out | to the LORD;\*  
with my voice I plead  
for mercy | to the LORD.

<sup>2</sup> I pour out my complaint be- | fore him;\*  
I tell my trouble be- | fore him.

<sup>3</sup> When my spirit faints within me,  
you | know my way!\*

In the path where I walk they have  
hidden a | trap for me.

<sup>4</sup> Look to the right and see:  
there is none who takes notice | of me;\*  
no refuge remains to me;  
no one cares | for my soul.

<sup>5</sup> I cry to you, | O LORD;\*  
 I say, “You are my refuge,  
 my portion in the land of the | living.”  
<sup>6</sup> Attend to my cry,  
 for I am brought | very low!\*  
 Deliver me from my persecutors,  
 for they are too | strong for me!  
<sup>7</sup> Bring me out of prison, that I may give  
 thanks | to your name!\*  
 The righteous will surround me,  
 for you will deal bountifully | with me.  
 —Psalm 142

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 91*

**Old Testament Reading:  
 Deuteronomy 20:1–20**

Laws Concerning Warfare

<sup>1</sup>“When you go out to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>And when you draw near to the battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the people <sup>3</sup>and shall say to them, ‘Hear, O Israel, today you are drawing near for battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint. Do not fear or panic or be in dread of them, <sup>4</sup>for the LORD your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.’ <sup>5</sup>Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying, ‘Is there any man who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it. <sup>6</sup>And is there any man who has planted a vineyard and has not enjoyed its fruit? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man enjoy its fruit. <sup>7</sup>And is there any man

who has betrothed a wife and has not taken her? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her.’ <sup>8</sup>And the officers shall speak further to the people, and say, ‘Is there any man who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go back to his house, lest he make the heart of his fellows melt like his own.’ <sup>9</sup>And when the officers have finished speaking to the people, then commanders shall be appointed at the head of the people.

<sup>10</sup>“When you draw near to a city to fight against it, offer terms of peace to it. <sup>11</sup>And if it responds to you peaceably and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labor for you and shall serve you. <sup>12</sup>But if it makes no peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. <sup>13</sup>And when the LORD your God gives it into your hand, you shall put all its males to the sword, <sup>14</sup>but the women and the little ones, the livestock, and everything else in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as plunder for yourselves. And you shall enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which the LORD your God has given you. <sup>15</sup>Thus you shall do to all the cities that are very far from you, which are not cities of the nations here. <sup>16</sup>But in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, <sup>17</sup>but you shall devote them to complete destruction, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the LORD your God has commanded, <sup>18</sup>that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the LORD your God.

<sup>19</sup>“When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them. You may eat from them, but you shall not cut them down. Are the trees in the field human, that they should be besieged by you? <sup>20</sup>Only the trees that you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, that you may build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it falls.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 15:21–39

#### The Faith of a Canaanite Woman

<sup>21</sup>And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup>And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.” <sup>23</sup>But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.” <sup>24</sup>He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” <sup>25</sup>But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” <sup>26</sup>And he answered, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” <sup>27</sup>She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” <sup>28</sup>Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

#### Jesus Heals Many

<sup>29</sup>Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. <sup>30</sup>And great crowds came to him, bringing with

them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, <sup>31</sup>so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

#### Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

<sup>32</sup>Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.” <sup>33</sup>And the disciples said to him, “Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?” <sup>34</sup>And Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven, and a few small fish.” <sup>35</sup>And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground, <sup>36</sup>he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>37</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over. <sup>38</sup>Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. <sup>39</sup>And after sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

### Writing

Yesterday you were a Canaanite soul bent together by sin; today you have been made straight by the Word. Do not be bent again and condemned to the earth, as if weighed down by the devil with a wooden collar, nor get an incurable curvature. Yesterday you were being dried up by an abundant hemorrhage, for you were pouring

out crimson sin; today [you are] stanced and flourishing again, for you have touched the hem of Christ and your issue has been stayed. Guard, I pray you, the cleansing lest you should again have a hemorrhage and not be able to lay hold of Christ to steal salvation; for Christ does not like to be stolen from often, though He is very merciful. Yesterday you were flung upon a bed, exhausted and paralyzed, and you had no one when the water should be troubled to put you into the pool. Today you have Him who is in one person Man and God, or rather God and Man. You were raised up from your bed, or rather you took up your bed, and publicly acknowledged the benefit. Do not again be thrown upon your bed by sinning, in the evil rest of a body paralyzed by its pleasures. But as you now are, so walk, mindful of the command, “Behold, you are made whole; sin no more lest a worse thing happen to you if you prove to be bad after the blessing you have received.” You have heard the loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth,” as you lay in the tomb—not, however, after four days, but after many days—and you were loosed from the bonds of your grave clothes. Do not again become dead nor live with those who dwell in the tombs nor bind yourself with the bonds of your own sins. For it is uncertain whether you will rise again from the tomb till the last and universal resurrection, which will bring every work into judgment, not to be healed but to be judged and to give account of all that for good or evil it has treasured up.

—Gregory Nazianzen

## Hymnody

To pastures green, Lord, safely guide,  
 To restful waters lead me;  
 Your table well for me provide,  
 Your wounded hand now feed me.  
 Though weary, sinful, sick, and weak,  
 Refuge in You alone I seek,  
 To share Your cup of healing.

—Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread  
 (LSB 625:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us to know Your Son, Jesus, to be the way, the truth, and the life that we may boldly confess Him to be the Christ and steadfastly walk in the way that leads to life eternal; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A74)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XXIII (XI) 1–6

## 22 OCTOBER

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> For God alone my soul waits in | silence;\*  
 from him comes my sal- | vation.

<sup>2</sup> He only is my rock and my salvation,  
 my | fortress;\*  
 I shall not be greatly | shaken.

<sup>3</sup> How long will all of you attack  
 a man to | batter him,\*  
 like a leaning wall, a | tottering fence?

- <sup>4</sup>They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in | falsehood.\*  
They bless with their mouths,  
but inwardly | they curse.
- <sup>5</sup>For God alone, O my soul, wait in | silence,\*  
for my hope is | from him.
- <sup>6</sup>He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my | fortress;\*  
I shall not be | shaken.
- <sup>7</sup>On God rests my salvation and my | glory;\*  
my mighty rock, my refuge | is God.
- <sup>8</sup>Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart be- | fore him;\*  
God is a refuge | for us.
- <sup>9</sup>Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a de- | lusion;\*  
in the balances they go up; they are together lighter | than a breath.
- <sup>10</sup>Put no trust in extortion;  
set no vain hopes on | robbery;\*  
if riches increase, set not your | heart on them.
- <sup>11</sup>Once God has spoken;  
twice have I | heard this:\*  
that power belongs to God, <sup>12</sup>and that to you, O Lord, belongs | steadfast love.  
For you will render | to a man\*  
according | to his work.  
—Psalm 62

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:137–144*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 21:1–23

Atonement for Unsolved Murders

<sup>1</sup>“If in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess someone is found slain, lying in the open country, and it is not known who killed him, <sup>2</sup>then your elders and your judges shall come out, and they shall measure the distance to the surrounding

cities. <sup>3</sup>And the elders of the city that is nearest to the slain man shall take a heifer that has never been worked and that has not pulled in a yoke. <sup>4</sup>And the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer’s neck there in the valley. <sup>5</sup>Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister to him and to bless in the name of the LORD, and by their word every dispute and every assault shall be settled. <sup>6</sup>And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley, <sup>7</sup>and they shall testify, ‘Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it shed. <sup>8</sup>Accept atonement, O LORD, for your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, and do not set the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of your people Israel, so that their blood guilt be atoned for.’ <sup>9</sup>So you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD.

Marrying Female Captives

<sup>10</sup>“When you go out to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God gives them into your hand and you take them captive, <sup>11</sup>and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you desire to take her to be your wife, <sup>12</sup>and you bring her home to your house, she shall shave her head and pare her nails. <sup>13</sup>And she shall take off the clothes in which she was captured and shall remain in your house and lament her father and her mother a full month. After that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. <sup>14</sup>But if you no longer delight in her, you shall let her go where she wants. But you shall

not sell her for money, nor shall you treat her as a slave, since you have humiliated her.

**Inheritance Rights of the Firstborn**

<sup>15</sup>“If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him children, and if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved, <sup>16</sup>then on the day when he assigns his possessions as an inheritance to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved as the firstborn in preference to the son of the unloved, who is the firstborn, <sup>17</sup>but he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the firstfruits of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his.

**A Rebellious Son**

<sup>18</sup>“If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, <sup>19</sup>then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, <sup>20</sup>and they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ <sup>21</sup>Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

**A Man Hanged on a Tree Is Cursed**

<sup>22</sup>“And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, <sup>23</sup>his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance.”

*Additional Reading: Deuteronomy 22:1–24:9*

**New Testament Reading:  
Matthew 16:1–12**

**The Pharisees and Sadducees Demand Signs**

<sup>1</sup>And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. <sup>2</sup>He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ <sup>3</sup>And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. <sup>4</sup>An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” So he left them and departed.

**The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees**

<sup>5</sup>When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to them, “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” <sup>7</sup>And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, “We brought no bread.” <sup>8</sup>But Jesus, aware of this, said, “O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? <sup>9</sup>Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? <sup>10</sup>Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? <sup>11</sup>How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” <sup>12</sup>Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

## Writing

Now we go forth . . . among our neighbors to learn how we should live with one another, everyone himself toward his neighbor. Therefore, God and government are not included in this [fifth] commandment. Nor is the power to kill taken away, which God and government have. To punish evildoers, God has delegated His authority to the government, not parents. In earlier times, as we read in Moses, parents were required to bring their own children to judgment and even to sentence them to death [Deuteronomy 21:18–21]. Therefore, what is forbidden in this commandment is forbidden to the individual in his relationship with anyone else, but not to the government.

Now, this commandment is easy enough and has often been presented, because we hear it each year in the Gospel of St. Matthew 5:20–26, where Christ Himself explains and sums it up. He says that we must not kill, neither with hand, heart, mouth, signs, gestures, help, nor counsel. Therefore, this commandment forbids everyone to be angry, except those (as we said) who are in the place of God, that is, parents and the government. For it is proper for God and for everyone who is in a divine estate to be angry, to rebuke, and to punish because of those very persons who transgress this and the other commandments [Romans 13:4].

. . . By the devil's encouragement you will get many enemies who cannot bear to see you have any good, either bodily or spiritual. When we see such people, our hearts also would like to rage and bleed and take vengeance. Then there arise cursing and blows. From them misery and murder finally come. In this commandment God—like a kind father—steps in ahead of us, intervenes,

and wishes to have the quarrel settled, so that no misfortune comes from it and no one destroys another person. And briefly, He would in this way protect, set free, and keep in peace everyone against the crime and violence of everyone else.

—Large Catechism I 180–182, 184–185

## Hymnody

Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;  
Curb those who by deceit or sword  
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son  
And bring to naught all He has done.

—Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your  
Word (*LSB* 655:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us to know Your Son, Jesus, to be the way, the truth, and the life that we may boldly confess Him to be the Christ and steadfastly walk in the way that leads to life eternal; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A74)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIII (XI) 7–17

## 23 OCTOBER

*St. James of Jerusalem,  
Brother of Jesus and Martyr*

## Psalmody

- <sup>10</sup>Some sat in darkness and  
in the shad- | ow of death,\*  
prisoners in affliction | and in irons,  
<sup>11</sup>for they had rebelled against  
the | words of God,\*  
and spurned the counsel  
of the | Most High.  
<sup>12</sup>So he bowed their hearts down  
with hard | labor;\*  
they fell down, with | none to help.  
<sup>13</sup>Then they cried to the LORD in  
their | trouble,\*  
and he delivered them  
from | their distress.  
<sup>14</sup>He brought them out of darkness  
and the shad- | ow of death,\*  
and burst their | bonds apart.  
<sup>15</sup>Let them thank the LORD  
for his | steadfast love,\*  
for his wondrous works to the  
chil- | dren of men!  
<sup>16</sup>For he shatters the | doors of bronze\*  
and cuts in two the | bars of iron.  
—Psalm 107:10–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 107*

## Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 24:10–25:10

[Miscellaneous Laws]

<sup>10</sup>“When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not go into his house to collect his pledge. <sup>11</sup>You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you. <sup>12</sup>And if he is a poor man, you shall not sleep in his pledge. <sup>13</sup>You shall restore to him the pledge as the sun sets, that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you. And it shall be righteousness for you before the LORD your God.

<sup>14</sup>“You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns. <sup>15</sup>You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the LORD, and you be guilty of sin.

<sup>16</sup>“Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin.

<sup>17</sup>“You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow’s garment in pledge, <sup>18</sup>but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.

<sup>19</sup>“When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. <sup>20</sup>When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. <sup>21</sup>When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. <sup>22</sup>You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.

<sup>25:1</sup>“If there is a dispute between men and they come into court and the judges decide between them, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty, <sup>2</sup>then if the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence with a number of stripes in proportion to his offense. <sup>3</sup>Forty stripes may be given him, but not more, lest, if one

should go on to beat him with more stripes than these, your brother be degraded in your sight.

<sup>4</sup>“You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.

Laws Concerning Levirate Marriage

<sup>5</sup>“If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband’s brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her. <sup>6</sup>And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. <sup>7</sup>And if the man does not wish to take his brother’s wife, then his brother’s wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to perpetuate his brother’s name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband’s brother to me.’ <sup>8</sup>Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, ‘I do not wish to take her,’ <sup>9</sup>then his brother’s wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother’s house.’ <sup>10</sup>And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.’”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 16:13–28

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

<sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup>And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or

one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup>He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” <sup>20</sup>Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

<sup>21</sup>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. <sup>22</sup>And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” <sup>23</sup>But he turned and said to 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.”

Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus

<sup>24</sup>Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup>For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. <sup>26</sup>For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? <sup>27</sup>For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. <sup>28</sup>Truly, I say to you, there are

some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

### Writing

It is not we who build. [Christ] builds the church. No man builds the church but Christ alone. Whoever is minded to build the church is surely well on the way to destroying it; for he will build a temple to idols without wishing or knowing it. We must confess—he builds. We must proclaim—he builds. We must pray to him—that he may build.

We do not know his plan. We cannot see whether he is building or pulling down. It may be that the times which by human standards are times of collapse are for him the great times of construction. It may be that the times which from a human point of view are great times for the church are times when it is pulled down.

It is a great comfort which Christ gives to his church: you confess, preach, bear witness to me and I alone will build where it pleases me. Do not meddle in what is my province. Do what is given to you to do well and you have done enough. But do it well. Pay no heed to views and opinions. Don't ask for judgments. Don't always be calculating what will happen. Don't always be on the lookout for another refuge! Church, stay a church! But church, confess, confess, confess! Christ alone is your Lord; from his grace alone can you live as you are. Christ builds.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

### Hymnody

Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's head,  
You are her one foundation;  
In You she trusts, before You bows,  
And waits for Your salvation.

Built on this rock secure,  
Your Church shall endure  
Though all the world decay  
And all things pass away.

O hear, O hear us, Jesus!

—Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's  
Head (*LSB* 647:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, shepherd of Your people, You raised up James the Just, brother of our Lord, to lead and guide Your Church. Grant that we may follow his example of prayer and reconciliation and be strengthened by the witness of his death; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F31)

### St. James of Jerusalem, Bishop and Martyr

St. James of Jerusalem (or “James the Just”) is referred to by St. Paul as “the Lord’s brother” (Galatians 1:19). Some modern theologians believe that James was a son of Joseph and Mary and, therefore, a biological brother of Jesus. But throughout most of the Church (historically, and even today), Paul’s term “brother” is understood as “cousin” or “kinsman,” and James is thought to be the son of a sister of Joseph or Mary who was widowed and had come to live with them. Along with other relatives of our Lord (except His mother), James did not believe in Jesus until after His resurrection (John

7:3–5; 1 Corinthians 15:7). After becoming a Christian, James was elevated to a position of leadership within the earliest Christian community. Especially following St. Peter's departure from Jerusalem, James was recognized as the bishop of the Church in that holy city (Acts 12:17; 15:12ff.). According to the historian Josephus, James was martyred in AD 62 by being stoned to death by the Sadducees. James authored the Epistle in the New Testament that bears his name. In it, he exhorts his readers to remain steadfast in the one true faith, even in the face of suffering and temptation, and to live by faith the life that is in Christ Jesus. Such a faith, he makes clear, is a busy and active thing, which never ceases to do good, to confess the Gospel by words and actions, and to stake its life, both now and forever, in the cross.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIII (XI) 18–27

**24 OCTOBER**

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD reigns; let the peoples | tremble!\*  
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim;  
let the | earth quake!
- <sup>2</sup> The LORD is great in | Zion;\*  
he is exalted over all the | peoples.
- <sup>3</sup> Let them praise your great  
and | awesome name!\*  
Ho- | ly is he!
- <sup>4</sup> The King in his might loves | justice.\*

You have established equity;  
you have executed justice and  
righteousness in | Jacob.

<sup>5</sup> Exalt the LORD our God; worship  
at his | footstool!\*  
Ho- | ly is he!

<sup>6</sup> Moses and Aaron were among his priests,  
Samuel also was among those who called  
up- | on his name.\*  
They called to the LORD,  
and he | answered them.

<sup>7</sup> In the pillar of the cloud he | spoke to them;\*  
they kept his testimonies and the statute  
that he | gave them.

<sup>8</sup> O LORD our God, you | answered them;\*  
you were a forgiving God to them,  
but an avenger of their wrong- | doings.

<sup>9</sup> Exalt the LORD our God, and worship  
at his holy | mountain;\*  
for the LORD our God is | holy!  
—Psalm 99

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 97*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 25:17–26:19

[Miscellaneous Laws]

<sup>17</sup>“Remember what Amalek did to you  
on the way as you came out of Egypt, <sup>18</sup>how  
he attacked you on the way when you were  
faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those  
who were lagging behind you, and he did not  
fear God. <sup>19</sup>Therefore when the LORD your  
God has given you rest from all your enemies  
around you, in the land that the LORD your  
God is giving you for an inheritance to pos-  
sess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek  
from under heaven; you shall not forget.

Offerings of Firstfruits and Tithes

<sup>26:1</sup>“When you come into the land that  
the LORD your God is giving you for an

inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it, <sup>2</sup>you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. <sup>3</sup>And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.' <sup>4</sup>Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

<sup>5</sup>"And you shall make response before the LORD your God, 'A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. <sup>6</sup>And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. <sup>7</sup>Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. <sup>9</sup>And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup>And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O LORD, have given me.' And you shall set it down before the LORD your God and worship before the Lord your God. <sup>11</sup>And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

<sup>12</sup>"When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, which

is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your towns and be filled, <sup>13</sup>then you shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion out of my house, and moreover, I have given it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all your commandment that you have commanded me. I have not transgressed any of your commandments, nor have I forgotten them. <sup>14</sup>I have not eaten of the tithe while I was mourning, or removed any of it while I was unclean, or offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God. I have done according to all that you have commanded me. <sup>15</sup>Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the ground that you have given us, as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.'

<sup>16</sup>"This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and rules. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>17</sup>You have declared today that the LORD is your God, and that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his commandments and his rules, and will obey his voice. <sup>18</sup>And the Lord has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments, <sup>19</sup>and that he will set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations that he has made, and that you shall be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised."

## New Testament Reading: Matthew 17:1–13

### The Transfiguration

<sup>1</sup>And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup>And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. <sup>3</sup>And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup>And 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.” <sup>5</sup>He 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.” <sup>6</sup>When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. <sup>7</sup>But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” <sup>8</sup>And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. <sup>9</sup>And 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.” <sup>10</sup>And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” <sup>11</sup>He answered, “Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. <sup>12</sup>But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” <sup>13</sup>Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

### Writing

Faith ought to lay hold on Christ as God and man in that nature by which He has been

made our neighbor, kinsman, and brother. For the life which belongs to the deity resides in and has in a sense been placed in the assumed humanity. The adversaries teach that faith ought to turn itself away from the present celebration of the Supper and in its thoughts ascend above all heavens and there seek and embrace Christ in His majesty. . . . But the proper, simple, and natural meaning of the words of institution teaches that Christ Himself is present with us in the celebration of the Supper with both His deity and His flesh, and that He comes to us in order to lay hold on us (Phil. 3:12) and join us to Himself as intimately as possible. This brings us sweetest comfort. For Christ, both God and man, must lay hold on us in order that there may be a union between Him and us. But we, weighed down by the burden of sin and pressed under the weight of our infirmity, are not yet able to enter the secret places of heaven (Col. 2:18) and penetrate to Him in glory. He Himself therefore comes to us in order to lay hold upon us with that nature by which He is our Brother. And because our weakness in this life cannot bear the glory of His majesty (Matt. 17:2ff; Acts 9:3 ff.) therefore His body and blood are present, distributed, and received under the bread and wine.

—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

With shining face and bright array  
Christ deigns to manifest today  
What glory shall be theirs above  
Who joy in God with perfect love.

—O Wondrous Type! O Vision Fair  
(LSB 413:3)

## Prayer of the Day

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. (L21)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIII (XI) 28–39

## 25 OCTOBER

*Dorcas (Tabitha), Lydia, and Phoebe,  
Faithful Women*

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>The LORD reigns; he is robed in | majesty;\*  
the LORD is robed; he has put on  
strength | as his belt.

Yes, the world is es- | tablished;\*  
it shall nev- | er be moved.

<sup>2</sup>Your throne is established | from of old;\*  
you are from ever- | lasting.

<sup>3</sup>The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the  
floods have lifted | up their voice;\*  
the floods lift up their | roaring.

<sup>4</sup>Mightier than the thunders of many waters,  
mightier than the waves | of the sea,\*  
the LORD on high is | mighty!

<sup>5</sup>Your decrees are very | trustworthy;\*  
holiness befits your house, O LORD,  
for- | evermore.

—Psalm 93

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 87*

## Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 27:1–26

The Altar on Mount Ebal

<sup>1</sup>Now Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, “Keep the whole commandment that I command you today. <sup>2</sup>And on the day you cross over the Jordan to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall set up large stones and plaster them with plaster. <sup>3</sup>And you shall write on them all the words of this law, when you cross over to enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you. <sup>4</sup>And when you have crossed over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, concerning which I command you today, on Mount Ebal, and you shall plaster them with plaster. <sup>5</sup>And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones. You shall wield no iron tool on them; <sup>6</sup>you shall build an altar to the LORD your God of uncut stones. And you shall offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God, <sup>7</sup>and you shall sacrifice peace offerings and shall eat there, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God. <sup>8</sup>And you shall write on the stones all the words of this law very plainly.”

Curses from Mount Ebal

<sup>9</sup>Then Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, “Keep silence and hear, O Israel: this day you have become the people

of the LORD your God. <sup>10</sup>You shall therefore obey the voice of the LORD your God, keeping his commandments and his statutes, which I command you today.”

<sup>11</sup>That day Moses charged the people, saying, <sup>12</sup>“When you have crossed over the Jordan, these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. <sup>13</sup>And these shall stand on Mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. <sup>14</sup>And the Levites shall declare to all the men of Israel in a loud voice:

<sup>15</sup>“Cursed be the man who makes a carved or cast metal image, an abomination to the Lord, a thing made by the hands of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret.’ And all the people shall answer and say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>16</sup>“Cursed be anyone who dishonors his father or his mother.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>17</sup>“Cursed be anyone who moves his neighbor’s landmark.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>18</sup>“Cursed be anyone who misleads a blind man on the road.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>19</sup>“Cursed be anyone who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>20</sup>“Cursed be anyone who lies with his father’s wife, because he has uncovered his father’s nakedness.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>21</sup>“Cursed be anyone who lies with any kind of animal.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>22</sup>“Cursed be anyone who lies with his sister, whether the daughter of his father

or the daughter of his mother.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>23</sup>“Cursed be anyone who lies with his mother-in-law.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>24</sup>“Cursed be anyone who strikes down his neighbor in secret.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>25</sup>“Cursed be anyone who takes a bribe to shed innocent blood.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>26</sup>“Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’”

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 17:14–27**

Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon

<sup>14</sup>And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, <sup>15</sup>said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. <sup>16</sup>And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.” <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.” <sup>18</sup>And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. <sup>19</sup>Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” <sup>20</sup>He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

Jesus Again Foretells Death, Resurrection

<sup>22</sup>As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, <sup>23</sup>and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed.

The Temple Tax

<sup>24</sup>When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not pay the tax?” <sup>25</sup>He said, “Yes.” And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?” <sup>26</sup>And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. <sup>27</sup>However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.”

**Writing**

One can say that in Christianity the extraordinary has become ordinary, but also that the ordinary has become extraordinary, the usual unusual, the common uncommon, that what all do has been transformed into a real priestly work and to a sacrifice that is offered to the most high God. . . . [T]he Lord Jesus was followed by a number of women whose names have come down to us. Kings are forgotten, emperors have fallen into the dust, and there is no one to remember them; the names of these women, however, are still being mentioned. There are only a few things we know about them, and what is said seems insignificant to us. They made offerings to the Son of Man from what they had . . .

provided such little services, as he deserved before all others. But because the common has become uncommon, thus these names are written in the Book of books.

. . . I said that because of Christianity the uncommon has become common and the common uncommon the Spirit and the purpose and way it was done. . . . I point to Christ according to Matthew 25. What does he say there by separating the sheep from the goats? Whom does he praise? Whom does he reproach? Whom does he call to inherit the Kingdom of his Father? Does he call the heroes, who accomplished great things, the kings with their crowns and those who struck with their great swords and brought about great changes upon earth? What does he do? He names and praises the same common things that I have said Christianity has made uncommon. He says: “I was hungry” and so forth—“come, you blessed of my Father” (Mt 25:34). . . . Thus, he asks for the food, for the drink, for the gift of oil and wine. He asks for all these common things, which I have said have become uncommon through his Spirit.

—Wilhelm Loehe

**Hymnody**

We walk by faith and not by sight,  
No gracious words we hear  
From Him who spoke as none e'er spoke,  
But we believe Him near.

—We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight  
(LSB 720:1)

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, You stirred to compassion the hearts of Your dear servants Dorcas, Lydia, and Phoebe to uphold and

sustain Your Church by their devoted and charitable deeds. Give us the same will to love You, open our eyes to see You in the least ones, and strengthen our hands to serve You in others, for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1101)

### Dorcas, Lydia, and Phoebe, Faithful Women

These women were exemplary Christians who demonstrated their faith by their material support of the Church. Dorcas (also known as Tabitha) was well-known and much loved for her acts of charity in the city of Joppa, especially for making clothes for the poor. When Dorcas died suddenly, the members of her congregation sent to the neighboring city of Lydda for the apostle Peter, who came and raised her from the dead (Acts 9:36–41). Lydia was a woman of Thyatira, who worked at Philippi selling a famous purple dye that was much in demand in the ancient world. She was also a “worshiper of God” at the local synagogue (Acts 16:14). When the apostle Paul encountered her in prayer among other proselyte women, his preaching of the Word brought Lydia to faith in Christ. She and her friends thus became the nucleus of the Christian community in Philippi (Acts 16:13–15, 40). Phoebe was another faithful woman associated with the apostle Paul. She was a deaconess from Cenchreae (the port of Corinth) whom Paul sent to the Church in Rome with his Epistle to the Romans. In it, he writes of her support for the work of the Early Church (Romans 16:1–2).

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIII (XI) 40–49

## 26 OCTOBER

*Philipp Nicolai, Johann Heermann,  
and Paul Gerhardt, Hymnwriters*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Save, O LORD, for the godly | one is gone;\*  
for the faithful have vanished from  
among the chil- | dren of man.
- <sup>2</sup> Everyone utters lies to his | neighbor;\*  
with flattering lips and a double | heart  
they speak.
- <sup>3</sup> May the LORD cut off all | flattering lips,\*  
the tongue that | makes great boasts,
- <sup>4</sup> those who say, “With our tongue  
we | will prevail,\*  
our lips are with us;  
who is master | over us?”
- <sup>5</sup> “Because the poor are plundered, because  
the needy groan, I will now arise,” | says  
the LORD;\*  
“I will place him in the safety  
for | which he longs.”
- <sup>6</sup> The words of the LORD are | pure words,\*  
like silver refined in a furnace on the  
ground, purified | seven times.
- <sup>7</sup> You, O LORD, will | keep them;\*  
you will guard us from this generation  
for- | ever.
- <sup>8</sup> On every side the | wicked prow],\*  
as vileness is exalted among  
the chil- | dren of man.  
—Psalm 12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 9*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Deuteronomy 28:1–22**

Blessings for Obedience

<sup>1</sup>“And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. <sup>2</sup>And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God. <sup>3</sup>Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field.

<sup>4</sup>Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. <sup>5</sup>Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. <sup>6</sup>Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

<sup>7</sup>“The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you. They shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. <sup>8</sup>The LORD will command the blessing on you in your barns and in all that you undertake. And he will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. <sup>9</sup>The LORD will establish you as a people holy to himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in his ways. <sup>10</sup>And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. <sup>11</sup>And the LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your livestock and in the fruit of your ground, within the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. <sup>12</sup>The LORD will open to you his good treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands.

And you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. <sup>13</sup>And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them, <sup>14</sup>and if you do not turn aside from any of the words that I command you today, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Curses for Disobedience

<sup>15</sup>“But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.

<sup>16</sup>Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. <sup>17</sup>Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

<sup>18</sup>Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. <sup>19</sup>Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

<sup>20</sup>“The LORD will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD will make the pestilence stick to you until he has consumed you off the land that you are entering to take possession of it. <sup>22</sup>The LORD will strike you with wasting disease and with fever, inflammation and fiery heat, and with drought and with blight and with mildew. They shall pursue you until you perish.”

## New Testament Reading: Matthew 18:1–20

### Who Is the Greatest?

<sup>1</sup>At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” <sup>2</sup>And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them <sup>3</sup>and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup>Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>5</sup>“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, <sup>6</sup>but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

### Temptations to Sin

<sup>7</sup>“Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! <sup>8</sup>And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. <sup>9</sup>And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

### The Parable of the Lost Sheep

<sup>10</sup>“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>12</sup>What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? <sup>13</sup>And if he finds

it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. <sup>14</sup>So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

### If Your Brother Sins Against You

<sup>15</sup>“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup>But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

<sup>18</sup>Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup>Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

## Writing

False doctrine of the Reformed and other sects: That a preacher does not have power to forgive sins in the place of God but should only proclaim the forgiveness of sins in general. Against this the Lutheran Church teaches according to God’s Word (John 20:32; 2 Corinthians 2:10; 2 Samuel 12:13; Matthew 3:6; 18:17–20): The preacher can and should, at Christ’s command and in Christ’s place, forgive the sins of him who desires this forgiveness, and the Christian should consider that “his sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.” For the Absolution is “not the voice of the man who is present, but

the Word of God who here forgives the sin.” It is chiefly for the sake of this comforting Absolution that we Lutherans retain private Confession, in exchange for which Luther would not accept a thousand worlds.

—Franz Pieper

### Hymnody

But watchful is the angel band  
That follows Christ on ev’ry hand  
To guard His people where they go  
And break the counsel of the foe.

—Lord God, to Thee We Give All  
Praise (*LSB* 522:7)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, the apostle Paul taught us to praise You in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. We thank You this day for those who have given to Your Church great hymns, especially Your servants Philipp Nicolai, Johann Heermann, and Paul Gerhardt. May Your Church never lack hymnwriters who through their words and music give You praise. Fill us with the desire to praise and thank You for Your great goodness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1102)

### Philipp Nicolai, Johann Heermann, and Paul Gerhardt, Hymnwriters

Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608) was a pastor in Germany during the Great Plague, which took the lives of thirteen hundred of his parishioners during a sixth-month period. In addition to his heroic pastoral ministry during that time of stress and sorrow, he wrote the texts for “Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying” and “O Morning Star, How Fair

and Bright,” known, respectively, as the king and queen of the Lutheran chorales. Johann Heermann (1585–1647), also a German pastor, suffered from poor health as well as from the ravages of the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648). His hymn texts are noted for their tenderness and depth of feeling. Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676) was another Lutheran pastor who endured the horrors of the Thirty Years’ War. By 1668, he had lost his pastoral position in Berlin (for refusing to compromise his Lutheran convictions) and endured the death of four of his five children and his wife. He nevertheless managed to write 133 hymns, all of which reflect his firm faith. Along with Martin Luther, he is regarded as one of Lutheranism’s finest hymnwriters.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIII (XI) 50–59

## 27 OCTOBER

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> May the LORD answer you  
in the day of | trouble!\*

May the name of the God  
of Jacob pro- | tect you!

<sup>2</sup> May he send you help  
from the sanctu- | ary\*  
and give you support from | Zion!

<sup>3</sup> May he remember all your | offerings\*  
and regard with favor your burnt  
sacri- | fices!

<sup>4</sup> May he grant you your | heart’s desire\*  
and fulfill | all your plans!

<sup>5</sup> May we shout for joy over your salvation,  
and in the name of our God  
set up our | banners!\*

May the LORD fulfill  
all your pe- | titions!

<sup>6</sup> Now I know that the LORD saves  
his a- | nointed;\*

he will answer him from his holy heaven  
with the saving might of his | right hand.

<sup>7</sup> Some trust in chariots  
and some in | horses;\*

but we trust in the name  
of the | LORD our God.

<sup>8</sup> They col- | lapse and fall;\*

but we rise and | stand upright.

<sup>9</sup> O LORD, | save the king!\*

May he answer us | when we call.

—Psalm 20

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 25*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 29:1–29

The Covenant Renewed in Moab

<sup>1</sup>These are the words of the covenant that the LORD commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that he had made with them at Horeb.

<sup>2</sup>And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: “You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, <sup>3</sup>the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders.

<sup>4</sup>But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear. <sup>5</sup>I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet. <sup>6</sup>You have not eaten bread, and you

have not drunk wine or strong drink, that you may know that I am the LORD your God.

<sup>7</sup>And when you came to this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan came out against us to battle, but we defeated them. <sup>8</sup>We took their land and gave it for an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of the Manassites.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

<sup>10</sup>“You are standing today all of you before the LORD your God: the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, <sup>11</sup>your little ones, your wives, and the sojourner who is in your camp, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water, <sup>12</sup>so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the LORD your God, which the LORD your God is making with you today, <sup>13</sup>that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. <sup>14</sup>It is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant, <sup>15</sup>but with whoever is standing here with us today before the LORD our God, and with whoever is not here with us today.

<sup>16</sup>“You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed.

<sup>17</sup>And you have seen their detestable things, their idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, which were among them. <sup>18</sup>Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, <sup>19</sup>one who, when he hears the

words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.' This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike. <sup>20</sup>The LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law. <sup>22</sup>And the next generation, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, will say, when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the LORD has made it sick—<sup>23</sup>the whole land burned out with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where no plant can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and wrath—<sup>24</sup>all the nations will say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land? What caused the heat of this great anger?' <sup>25</sup>Then people will say, 'It is because they abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, <sup>26</sup>and went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them. <sup>27</sup>Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book, <sup>28</sup>and the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as they are this day.'

<sup>29</sup>"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 18:21–35**

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.

<sup>23</sup>"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup>When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup>And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' <sup>29</sup>So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' <sup>30</sup>He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>And should not you have had

mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?<sup>34</sup> And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. <sup>35</sup>So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

## Writing

If the mass is a promise, as has been said, then access to it is to be gained, not with any works, or powers, or merits of one’s own, but by faith alone. For where there is the Word of the promising God, there must necessarily be the faith of the accepting man. It is plain therefore, that the beginning of our salvation is a faith which clings to the Word of the promising God, who, without any effort on our part, in free and unmerited mercy takes the initiative and offers us the word of his promise. “He sent forth his word, and thus [*sic*] healed them,” not: “He accepted our work, and thus healed us.” First of all there is God’s Word. After it follows faith; after faith, love; then love does every good work, for it does no wrong, indeed, it is the fulfilling of the law [Rom. 13:10]. In no other way can man come to God or deal with him than through faith. That is to say, that the author of salvation is not man, by any works of his own, but God, through his promise; and that all things depend on, and are upheld and preserved by, the word of his power [Heb. 1:3], through which he brought us forth, to be a kind of first fruits of his creatures [Jas. 1:18].

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Forgive our sins, Lord, we implore,  
That they may trouble us no more;  
We, too, will gladly those forgive  
Who hurt us by the way they live.  
Help us in our community  
To serve each other willingly.

—Our Father, Who from Heaven  
Above (LSB 766:6)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, our refuge and strength, the author of all godliness, hear the devout prayers of Your Church, especially in times of persecution, and grant that what we ask in faith we may obtain; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A77)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIII (XI) 60–71

## 28 OCTOBER

*St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles*

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Unless the LORD builds the house,  
those who build it la- | bor in vain.\*

Unless the LORD watches over the city,  
the watchman stays a- | wake in vain.

<sup>2</sup> It is in vain that you rise up early and go late  
to rest, eating the bread of | anxious toil;\*  
for he gives to his be- | lovèd sleep.

<sup>3</sup>Behold, children are a heritage | from  
the LORD,\*

the fruit of the womb | a reward.

<sup>4</sup>Like arrows in the hand of a | warrior\*  
are the children | of one's youth.

<sup>5</sup>Blessèd is the man who fills his  
quiver | with them!\*

He shall not be put to shame when he  
speaks with his enemies | in the gate.

—Psalm 127

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 132*

### **Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 30:1–20**

Repentance and Forgiveness

<sup>1</sup>“And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, <sup>2</sup>and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>3</sup>then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. <sup>4</sup>If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. <sup>5</sup>And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD your God will put all these curses on your

foes and enemies who persecuted you. <sup>8</sup>And you shall again obey the voice of the LORD and keep all his commandments that I command you today. <sup>9</sup>The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, <sup>10</sup>when you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

The Choice of Life and Death

<sup>11</sup>“For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. <sup>12</sup>It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ <sup>13</sup>Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ <sup>14</sup>But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

<sup>15</sup>“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. <sup>16</sup>If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. <sup>17</sup>But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup>I declare to you today, that you shall surely

perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. <sup>19</sup>I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, <sup>20</sup>loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 19:1–15

#### Teaching About Divorce

<sup>1</sup>Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. <sup>2</sup>And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

<sup>3</sup>And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” <sup>4</sup>He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup>and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? <sup>6</sup>So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” <sup>7</sup>They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” <sup>8</sup>He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. <sup>9</sup>And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

<sup>10</sup>The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” <sup>11</sup>But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. <sup>12</sup>For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

#### Let the Children Come to Me

<sup>13</sup>Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, <sup>14</sup>but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” <sup>15</sup>And he laid his hands on them and went away.

### Writing

The Gospel speaks of righteousness, salvation, and eternal life. The law of Moses clearly says in Deut. 30:19, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing”; cf. Rom. 7:10. These statements must not be understood as applying only to the concerns of this life, for in Luke 10:25ff., when the scribe says, “What shall I do to gain eternal life?” Christ replies, “What is written in the Law . . . this do and you shall live.”

Therefore, what is the difference between the doctrine of the Law and that of the Gospel? . . . The Law sets forth righteousness, salvation, and eternal life, to be sure, but on the condition that “He who does these things shall live by them,” Rom. 10:5; cf. Matt. 19:17; Luke 10:28; Rom. 2:13. Therefore it is the heart of the doctrine of the Law that good works are necessary for salvation, so that

without them it is impossible for a person to be saved.

Because this is impossible for the Law in that “it was weak through the flesh,” Rom. 8:3, and thus had become the “ministration” of sin, death, and condemnation, 2 Cor. 3:7, therefore the Gospel offers us righteousness, salvation, and eternal life apart from our works, freely, for the sake of the obedience of the Son of God our Mediator, to be received by faith alone, Rom. 4:5 and Gal. 3:22.

—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

That all of us, Your children dear,  
By Christ redeemed, may Christ revere;  
Lead us in joy that all we do  
Will witness to our love for You.

—Lord Jesus Christ, the Children’s  
Friend (*LSB* 866:5)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You chose Your servants Simon and Jude to be numbered among the glorious company of the apostles. As they were faithful and zealous in their mission, so may we with ardent devotion make known the love and mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F32)

### St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles

In the lists of the twelve apostles (Matthew 10:2–4; Mark 3:16–19; Luke 6:14–16; Acts 1:13), the tenth and eleventh places are occupied by Simon the Zealot (or “Canaanite”) and by Jude (or “Judas,” not Iscariot but “of James”), who was apparently known also as Thaddaeus. According

to early Christian tradition, Simon and Jude journeyed together as missionaries to Persia, where they were martyred. It is likely for this reason, at least in part, that these two apostles are commemorated on the same day. Simon is not mentioned in the New Testament apart from the lists of the twelve apostles. Thus, he is remembered and honored for the sake of his office, and thereby stands before us—in eternity, as in his life and ministry on earth—in the name and stead of Christ Jesus, our Lord. We give thanks to God for calling and sending Simon, along with Jude and all of the apostles, to preach and teach the Holy Gospel, to proclaim repentance and forgiveness, and to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (John 4:1–2; Matthew 10; 28:16–20; Luke 24:46–49).

Jude appears in John’s Gospel (14:22) on the night of our Lord’s betrayal and the beginning of His Passion, asking Jesus how it is that He will manifest Himself to the disciples but not to the world. The answer that Jesus gives to this question is a pertinent emphasis for this festival day: “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (John 14:23). Surely both Jude and Simon exemplified, in life and death, their love for Jesus and their faith in His Word. Not only are we thus strengthened in our Christian faith and life by their example, but, above all, we are encouraged by the faithfulness of the Lord in keeping His promise to them to bring them home to Himself in heaven. There they live with Him forever, where we shall someday join them.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIV (XII) 1–8

29 OCTOBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Be gracious to me, O God,  
for man tramples | on me;\*  
all day long an attacker op- | presses me;
- <sup>2</sup> my enemies trample on me | all day long,\*  
for many attack me | proudly.
- <sup>3</sup> When I | am afraid,\*  
I put my | trust in you.
- <sup>4</sup> In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust;  
I shall not | be afraid.\*  
What can flesh | do to me?
- <sup>5</sup> All day long they in- | jure my cause;\*  
all their thoughts are against me  
for | evil.
- <sup>6</sup> They stir up strife, they lurk;  
they | watch my steps,\*  
as they have waited | for my life.
- <sup>7</sup> For their crime will | they escape?\*  
In wrath cast down the peoples, | O God!
- <sup>8</sup> You have kept count of my tossings;  
put my tears in your | bottle.\*  
Are they not | in your book?
- <sup>9</sup> Then my enemies will turn back  
in the day | when I call.\*  
This I know, that God is | for me.
- <sup>10</sup> In God, whose | word I praise,\*  
in the LORD, whose | word I praise,
- <sup>11</sup> in God I trust; I shall not | be afraid.\*  
What can man | do to me?
- <sup>12</sup> I must perform my vows to you, | O God;\*  
I will render thank offerings | to you.
- <sup>13</sup> For you have delivered my soul from death,  
yes, my feet from | falling,\*

that I may walk before God  
in the | light of life.

—Psalm 56

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 58*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 31:1–29

Joshua to Succeed Moses

<sup>1</sup>So Moses continued to speak these words to all Israel. <sup>2</sup>And he said to them, “I am 120 years old today. I am no longer able to go out and come in. The LORD has said to me, ‘You shall not go over this Jordan.’ <sup>3</sup>The LORD your God himself will go over before you. He will destroy these nations before you, so that you shall dispossess them, and Joshua will go over at your head, as the LORD has spoken.

<sup>4</sup>And the LORD will do to them as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when he destroyed them. <sup>5</sup>And the LORD will give them over to you, and you shall do to them according to the whole commandment that I have commanded you. <sup>6</sup>Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

<sup>7</sup>Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. <sup>8</sup>It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”

The Reading of the Law

<sup>9</sup>Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all

the elders of Israel. <sup>10</sup>And Moses commanded them, “At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, <sup>11</sup>when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. <sup>12</sup>Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, <sup>13</sup>and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.”

Joshua Commissioned to Lead Israel

<sup>14</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, the days approach when you must die. Call Joshua and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may commission him.”

And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting. <sup>15</sup>And the LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud. And the pillar of cloud stood over the entrance of the tent.

<sup>16</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. <sup>17</sup>Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’ <sup>18</sup>And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods.

<sup>19</sup>“Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel. <sup>20</sup>For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant. <sup>21</sup>And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring). For I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give.” <sup>22</sup>So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the people of Israel.

<sup>23</sup>And the LORD commissioned Joshua the son of Nun and said, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the people of Israel into the land that I swore to give them. I will be with you.”

<sup>24</sup>When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book to the very end, <sup>25</sup>Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, <sup>26</sup>“Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against you. <sup>27</sup>For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD. How much more after my death! <sup>28</sup>Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them. <sup>29</sup>For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you. And in the days to come evil will befall you, because you

will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 19:16–30

The Rich Young Man

<sup>16</sup>And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” <sup>17</sup>And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” <sup>18</sup>He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, <sup>19</sup>Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>20</sup>The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?” <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” <sup>22</sup>When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

<sup>23</sup>And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup>Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” <sup>25</sup>When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” <sup>26</sup>But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” <sup>27</sup>Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” <sup>28</sup>Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious

throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup>And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. <sup>30</sup>But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

### Writing

The Confutation [written against the Augsburg Confession] also says that the monks merit eternal life more abundantly and quotes Scripture, “everyone who has left houses,” and so on (Matthew 19:29). So here it claims perfection also for man-made religious rites. But this Scripture passage in no way favors monastic life. Christ does not mean that leaving parents, wife, and siblings is a work that must be done because it merits the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Indeed, such leaving is cursed. Anyone who leaves parents or wife to merit the forgiveness of sins or eternal life by this work dishonors Christ.

There are two kinds of leaving. [1.] One happens without a call, without God’s command, which Christ does not approve (Matthew 15:9). The works we choose are useless services. When Christ speaks about leaving wife and children, it becomes clear that He does not approve this kind of leaving. We know that God’s commandment forbids leaving wife and children. [2.] God’s command to leave is different, that is, when power or tyranny pushes us either to leave or to deny the Gospel. Here we are commanded to bear injury and should rather allow not only wealth, wife, and children, but life to be taken from us. Christ approves of this kind of leaving, and so He adds for the Gospel’s “sake” [Mark 10:29]. He does so to illustrate

that He is speaking not of those who injure wife and children, but who bear injury because of the confession of the Gospel. For the Gospel's sake we should even leave our body. Here it would be ridiculous to hold that it would serve God to kill oneself and to leave the body without God's command. So, too, it is ridiculous to hold that it is a service to God without His command to leave possessions, friends, wife, and children.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVII (XIII) 40–42

### Hymnody

Seek whom you may  
 To be your stay,  
 None can redeem his brother.  
 All helpers failed;  
 This man prevailed,  
 The God-man and none other,  
 Our Servant-King  
 Of whom we sing.  
 We're justified  
 Because He died,  
 The guilty being guiltless.

—Seek Where You May to Find a Way  
 (LSB 557:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, from whom all good proceeds, grant to us, Your humble servants, Your holy inspiration, that we may set our minds on the things that are right and, by Your merciful guiding, accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A76)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV (XII) 9–15

### 30 OCTOBER

Propers for October 30–November 26 for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.

### Psalmody

- <sup>7</sup> For we are brought to an end  
 by your | anger;\*  
 by your wrath we | are dismayed.
- <sup>8</sup> You have set our iniquities be- | fore you,\*  
 our secret sins in the light  
 of your | presence.
- <sup>9</sup> For all our days pass away un- | der  
 your wrath;\*  
 we bring our years to an end | like a sigh.
- <sup>10</sup> The years of our life are seventy,  
 or even by reason of strength | eighty;\*  
 yet their span is but toil and trouble;  
 they are soon gone, and we | fly away.
- <sup>11</sup> Who considers the power of your | anger,\*  
 and your wrath according  
 to the | fear of you?
- <sup>12</sup> So teach us to number | our days\*  
 that we may get a heart of | wisdom.
- <sup>13</sup> Return, O LORD! | How long?\*
- Have pity on your | servants!
- <sup>14</sup> Satisfy us in the morning with  
 your | steadfast love,\*  
 that we may rejoice and be glad | all  
 our days.
- <sup>15</sup> Make us glad for as many days  
 as you have af- | flicted us,\*  
 and for as many years as we  
 have seen | evil.

<sup>16</sup>Let your work be shown to your | servants,\*  
and your glorious power  
to their | children.

<sup>17</sup>Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon  
us, and establish the work of our  
hands up- | on us;\*  
yes, establish the work | of our hands!  
—Psalm 90:7–17

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 90*

### Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 31:30–32:27

The Song of Moses

<sup>30</sup>Then Moses spoke the words of this  
song until they were finished, in the ears of  
all the assembly of Israel:

<sup>32:1</sup>“Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak,  
and let the earth hear the words  
of my mouth.

<sup>2</sup>May my teaching drop as the rain,  
my speech distill as the dew,  
like gentle rain upon the tender grass,  
and like showers upon the herb.

<sup>3</sup>For I will proclaim the name  
of the LORD;  
ascribe greatness to our God!

<sup>4</sup>“The Rock, his work is perfect,  
for all his ways are justice.  
A God of faithfulness and without  
iniquity,  
just and upright is he.

<sup>5</sup>They have dealt corruptly with him;  
they are no longer his children  
because they are blemished;  
they are a crooked and twisted  
generation.

<sup>6</sup>Do you thus repay the LORD,  
you foolish and senseless people?  
Is not he your father, who created you,  
who made you and established you?

<sup>7</sup>Remember the days of old;  
consider the years of many  
generations;  
ask your father, and he will show you,  
your elders, and they will tell you.

<sup>8</sup>When the Most High gave to the nations  
their inheritance,  
when he divided mankind,  
he fixed the borders of the peoples  
according to the number  
of the sons of God.

<sup>9</sup>But the LORD’s portion is his people,  
Jacob his allotted heritage.

<sup>10</sup>“He found him in a desert land,  
and in the howling waste  
of the wilderness;  
he encircled him, he cared for him,  
he kept him as the apple of his eye.

<sup>11</sup>Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,  
that flutters over its young,  
spreading out its wings, catching them,  
bearing them on its pinions,

<sup>12</sup>the LORD alone guided him,  
no foreign god was with him.

<sup>13</sup>He made him ride on the high places  
of the land,  
and he ate the produce of the field,  
and he suckled him with honey out  
of the rock,  
and oil out of the flinty rock.

<sup>14</sup>Curds from the herd,  
and milk from the flock,  
with fat of lambs,  
rams of Bashan and goats,  
with the very finest of the wheat—  
and you drank foaming wine made  
from the blood of the grape.

<sup>15</sup>“But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked;  
you grew fat, stout, and sleek;  
then he forsook God who made him

and scoffed at the Rock  
of his salvation.

<sup>16</sup>They stirred him to jealousy  
with strange gods;  
with abominations they provoked  
him to anger.

<sup>17</sup>They sacrificed to demons  
that were no gods,  
to gods they had never known,  
to new gods that had come recently,  
whom your fathers had never  
dreaded.

<sup>18</sup>You were unmindful  
of the Rock that bore you,  
and you forgot the God  
who gave you birth.

<sup>19</sup>“The LORD saw it and spurned them,  
because of the provocation  
of his sons and his daughters.

<sup>20</sup>And he said, ‘I will hide my face  
from them;  
I will see what their end will be,  
For they are a perverse generation,  
children in whom is no faithfulness.

<sup>21</sup>They have made me jealous  
with what is no god;  
they have provoked me to anger  
with their idols.

So I will make them jealous  
with those who are no people;  
I will provoke them to anger  
with a foolish nation.

<sup>22</sup>For a fire is kindled by my anger,  
and it burns to the depths of Sheol,  
devours the earth and its increase,  
and sets on fire the foundations  
of the mountains.

<sup>23</sup>“And I will heap disasters upon them;  
I will spend my arrows on them;

<sup>24</sup>they shall be wasted with hunger,

and devoured by plague  
and poisonous pestilence;

I will send the teeth of beasts  
against them,

with the venom of things  
that crawl in the dust.

<sup>25</sup>Outdoors the sword shall bereave,  
and indoors terror,  
for young man and woman alike,  
the nursing child with the man  
of gray hairs.

<sup>26</sup>I would have said,  
“I will cut them to pieces;  
I will wipe them  
from human memory,”

<sup>27</sup>had I not feared provocation  
by the enemy,  
lest their adversaries should  
misunderstand,  
lest they should say,  
“Our hand is triumphant,  
it was not the LORD  
who did all this.” ’ ’

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 20:1–16

Laborers in the Vineyard

<sup>1</sup>“For the kingdom of heaven is like  
a master of a house who went out early  
in the morning to hire laborers for his  
vineyard. <sup>2</sup>After agreeing with the laborers  
for a denarius a day, he sent them into his  
vineyard. <sup>3</sup>And going out about the third  
hour he saw others standing idle in the  
marketplace, <sup>4</sup>and to them he said, ‘You go  
into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I  
will give you.’ <sup>5</sup>So they went. Going out again  
about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he  
did the same. <sup>6</sup>And about the eleventh hour  
he went out and found others standing. And  
he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here

idle all day?’<sup>7</sup> They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’<sup>8</sup> And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’<sup>9</sup> And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius.<sup>10</sup> Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius.<sup>11</sup> And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house,<sup>12</sup> saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’<sup>13</sup> But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?’<sup>14</sup> Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you.<sup>15</sup> Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’<sup>16</sup> So the last will be first, and the first last.”

## Writing

This Gospel cannot be praised enough because of its kindness, for it is extraordinarily comforting to repentant and humble hearts, who desire to be saved. This is the center: Let no one doubt; our salvation does not consist in our good works but only and merely on the fact that the heavenly Father is so kind. Our salvation is based simply on the mercy, grace, and kindness of the heavenly Father, which the Lord Jesus earned on the cross with His bloody, sour work. . . . But this text is also very frightening to all puffed-up, proud spirits, whose hearts are swollen up in arrogance like an oven, and who build on their own holiness. . . .

In this Gospel there are three words that are the foundational pillars on which the whole building of this text rests: First, there is the “vineyard.” Into the vineyard one must go and not stand idly in the worldly sin-market. Second, it speaks of the “work.” This must be done, whether it is much or little. Idle grape-gorgers do not belong in the vineyard. Third, it mentions the loving heart of the heavenly Father, who is so kind. In distress and death, one must comfort himself with Him alone, for by our works we are lost. We merit only pure wrath. Pay attention to these three pages and the entire Gospel will become light and clear for you, for the goal and purpose of the Gospel is not directed to who gets the coin (as some people have broken their heads on this question yet have only been made worse) but to the question of who retains the grace of the heavenly Father, who is so kind.

—Valerius Herberger

## Hymnody

By grace! None dare lay claim to merit;  
Our works and conduct have no worth.  
God in His love sent our Redeemer,  
Christ Jesus, to this sinful earth;  
His death did for our sins atone,  
And we are saved by grace alone.

—By Grace I’m Saved (*LSB* 566:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, since we cannot stand before You relying on anything we have done, help us trust in Your abiding grace and live according to Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A78)

**Suggested Reading from  
the Book of Concord**

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIV (XII) 16–21

**31 OCTOBER**

*Reformation Day*

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> God is our ref- | uge and strength,\*  
a very present help in | trouble.
- <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear though  
the | earth gives way,\*  
though the mountains be moved  
into the heart | of the sea,
- <sup>3</sup> though its waters | roar and foam,\*  
though the mountains tremble  
at its | swelling.
- <sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams  
make glad the cit- | y of God,\*  
the holy habitation of the | Most High.
- <sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of her;  
she shall | not be moved;\*  
God will help her when | morning dawns.
- <sup>6</sup> The nations rage, the kingdoms | totter;\*  
he utters his voice, the | earth melts.
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is | with us;\*  
the God of Jacob is our | fortress.
- <sup>8</sup> Come, behold the works | of the LORD,\*  
how he has brought desolations | on  
the earth.
- <sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the end | of  
the earth;\*  
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the chariots | with fire.
- <sup>10</sup> “Be still, and know that | I am God.\*  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted | in the earth!”

- <sup>11</sup> The LORD of hosts is | with us;\*  
the God of Jacob is our | fortress.  
—Psalm 46

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 115*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Deuteronomy 32:28–52**

[The Song of Moses]

- <sup>28</sup>“For they are a nation void of counsel,  
and there is no understanding  
in them.
- <sup>29</sup>If they were wise,  
they would understand this;  
they would discern their latter end!
- <sup>30</sup>How could one have chased a thousand,  
and two have put ten thousand  
to flight,  
unless their Rock had sold them,  
and the LORD had given them up?
- <sup>31</sup>For their rock is not as our Rock;  
our enemies are by themselves.
- <sup>32</sup>For their vine comes from the vine  
of Sodom  
and from the fields of Gomorrah;  
their grapes are grapes of poison;  
their clusters are bitter;
- <sup>33</sup>their wine is the poison of serpents  
and the cruel venom of asps.
- <sup>34</sup>“Is not this laid up in store with me,  
sealed up in my treasuries?
- <sup>35</sup>Vengeance is mine, and recompense,  
for the time when their foot shall slip;  
for the day of their calamity is at hand,  
and their doom comes swiftly.’
- <sup>36</sup>For the LORD will vindicate his people  
and have compassion  
on his servants,  
when he sees that their power is gone

and there is none remaining,  
bond or free.

<sup>37</sup>Then he will say, ‘Where are their gods,  
the rock in which they took refuge,

<sup>38</sup>who ate the fat of their sacrifices  
and drank the wine  
of their drink offering?

Let them rise up and help you;  
let them be your protection!

<sup>39</sup>“ See now that I, even I, am he,  
and there is no god beside me;

I kill and I make alive;  
I wound and I heal;  
and there is none that can deliver  
out of my hand.

<sup>40</sup>For I lift up my hand to heaven  
and swear, As I live forever,

<sup>41</sup>if I sharpen my flashing sword  
and my hand takes hold  
on judgment,

I will take vengeance on my adversaries  
and will repay those who hate me.

<sup>42</sup>I will make my arrows drunk  
with blood,  
and my sword shall devour flesh—  
with the blood of the slain  
and the captives,  
from the long-haired heads  
of the enemy.’

<sup>43</sup>“Rejoice with him, O heavens;  
bow down to him, all gods,  
for he avenges the blood of his children  
and takes vengeance  
on his adversaries.

He repays those who hate him  
and cleanses his people’s land.”

<sup>44</sup>Moses came and recited all the words  
of this song in the hearing of the people,  
he and Joshua the son of Nun. <sup>45</sup>And when  
Moses had finished speaking all these words

to all Israel, <sup>46</sup>he said to them, “Take to heart  
all the words by which I am warning you  
today, that you may command them to your  
children, that they may be careful to do all  
the words of this law. <sup>47</sup>For it is no empty  
word for you, but your very life, and by this  
word you shall live long in the land that you  
are going over the Jordan to possess.”

Moses’ Death Foretold

<sup>48</sup>That very day the LORD spoke to Moses,  
<sup>49</sup>“Go up this mountain of the Abarim,  
Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab,  
opposite Jericho, and view the land of  
Canaan, which I am giving to the people  
of Israel for a possession. <sup>50</sup>And die on the  
mountain which you go up, and be gathered  
to your people, as Aaron your brother died in  
Mount Hor and was gathered to his people,  
<sup>51</sup>because you broke faith with me in the  
midst of the people of Israel at the waters of  
Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin,  
and because you did not treat me as holy in  
the midst of the people of Israel. <sup>52</sup>For you  
shall see the land before you, but you shall  
not go there, into the land that I am giving to  
the people of Israel.”

*Additional Reading: Deuteronomy 33:1–29*

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 20:17–34**

Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time

<sup>17</sup>And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem,  
he took the twelve disciples aside, and on  
the way he said to them, <sup>18</sup>“See, we are going  
up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will  
be delivered over to the chief priests and  
scribes, and they will condemn him to death  
<sup>19</sup>and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be

mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”

A Mother’s Request

<sup>20</sup>Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. <sup>21</sup>And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” <sup>22</sup>Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” <sup>23</sup>He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” <sup>24</sup>And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. <sup>25</sup>But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup>It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup>and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, <sup>28</sup>even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

<sup>29</sup>And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. <sup>30</sup>And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” <sup>31</sup>The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” <sup>32</sup>And stopping, Jesus called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” <sup>33</sup>They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes

be opened.” <sup>34</sup>And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.

**Writing**

May you ever cherish and treasure this thought. Christ is made a servant of sin, yea, a bearer of sin, and the lowliest and most despised person. He destroys all sin by Himself and says: “I came not to be served but to serve” (Matt. 20:28). There is no greater bondage than that of sin; and there is no greater service than that displayed by the Son of God, who becomes the servant of all, no matter how poor, wretched, or despised they may be, and bears their sins. It would be spectacular and amazing, prompting all the world to open ears and eyes, mouth and nose in uncomprehending wonderment, if some king’s son were to appear in a beggar’s home to nurse him in his illness, wash off his filth, and do everything else the beggar would have to do. Would this not be profound humility? Any spectator or any beneficiary of this honor would feel impelled to admit that he had seen or experienced something unusual and extraordinary, something magnificent. But what is a king or an emperor compared with the Son of God? Furthermore, what is a beggar’s filth or stench compared with the filth of sin which is ours by nature, stinking a hundred thousand times worse and looking infinitely more repulsive to God than any foul matter found in a hospital? And yet the love of the Son of God for us is of such magnitude that the greater the filth and stench of our sins, the more He befriends us, the more He cleanses us, relieving us of all our misery and of the burden of all our sins and placing them upon His own back. All the holiness of the monks stinks in comparison with this service

of Christ, the fact that the beloved Lamb, the great Man, yes, the Son of the Exalted Majesty, descends from heaven to serve me.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

He whom the sea  
And wind obey  
Doth come to serve the sinner in great  
meekness.

Thou, God's own Son,  
With us art one,  
Dost join us and our children in our  
weakness.

—O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is  
(LSB 372:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F33)

### Reformation Day

On October 31, 1517, an Augustinian monk posted ninety-five statements for discussion on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Dr. Martin Luther hoped that posting his theses would bring about an academic debate regarding repentance, the sale of indulgences, and other matters of concern within the Roman Catholic Church. However, Rome eventually excommunicated Luther, judging him to be a heretic. Luther's reforms, centered on

the teaching that a believer is justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, sparked religious reforms not only in the German states but also in many European countries. In 1667, Elector John George II of Saxony standardized the custom of observing Luther's October 31 posting of the Ninety-five Theses.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIV (XII) 22–26

## 1 NOVEMBER

*All Saints' Day*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise God  
in his sanctu- | ary;\*  
praise him in his mighty | heavens!
- <sup>2</sup> Praise him for his | mighty deeds;\*  
praise him according  
to his excellent | greatness!
- <sup>3</sup> Praise him with | trumpet sound;\*  
praise him with | lute and harp!
- <sup>4</sup> Praise him with tambou- | rine and dance;\*  
praise him with | strings and pipe!
- <sup>5</sup> Praise him with sounding | cymbals;\*  
praise him with loud clashing | cymbals!
- <sup>6</sup> Let everything that has breath | praise  
the LORD!\*
- Praise | the LORD!  
—Psalm 150

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 147*

## Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 34:1–12

The Death of Moses

<sup>1</sup>Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, <sup>2</sup>all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, <sup>3</sup>the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the Valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. <sup>4</sup>And the LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, ‘I will give it to your offspring.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.” <sup>5</sup>So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, <sup>6</sup>and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day. <sup>7</sup>Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated. <sup>8</sup>And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

<sup>9</sup>And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>10</sup>And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, <sup>11</sup>none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, <sup>12</sup>and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

## New Testament Reading: Matthew 21:1–22

The Triumphal Entry

<sup>1</sup>Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and she will send them at once.” <sup>4</sup>This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

<sup>5</sup>“Say to the daughter of Zion,  
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a beast  
of burden.’”

<sup>6</sup>The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. <sup>7</sup>They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup>Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” <sup>10</sup>And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” <sup>11</sup>And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

<sup>12</sup>And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. <sup>13</sup>He said to them, “It is written, ‘My

house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

<sup>14</sup>And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. <sup>15</sup>But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant, <sup>16</sup>and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read,

" 'Out of the mouth of infants  
and nursing babies  
you have prepared praise'?"

<sup>17</sup>And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

<sup>18</sup>In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. <sup>19</sup>And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once.

<sup>20</sup>When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?" <sup>21</sup>And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen. <sup>22</sup>And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."

## Writing

Patriarchs of sacred story  
And the prophets there are found;  
The apostles, too, in glory  
On twelve seats are there enthroned

All the saints that have ascended  
Age on age, through time extended,  
There is blissful concert sing  
Hallelujahs to their King.

Thus the old funeral hymn . . . speaks of the church of all the perfected in heaven (cf. Heb 12:22–23). And this thought of the fathers of the church who have preceded us into heaven rings through the centuries down the Wilhelm Loehe's hymn on the Sacrament, where it says of heaven: "There the angel host stands inflamed in your [god's] light, and my fathers gaze upon your sight." All the saints, from the beginning of the world, who have died believing in the Redeemer, whether He was yet to come or had come in the flesh, all members of the people of God of all times to the present day, in this sense, all are fathers of the church. Whether Christians have found themselves in the loneliness of a Siberian prison camp, or the isolation of the diaspora, or suffering inner alienation within the great secularized "churches" of our century, it has become ever more the consolation of those who have suffered for the sake of the church, and whom God has lead on a "lonely path," to know that they are not alone in the one church of God. They who have been removed from every error and sin of the earthly church stand with us in the seamless fellowship of the body of Christ.

—Hermann Sasse

## Hymnody

Let shouts of gladness rise  
 Triumphant to the skies.  
 Now comes the King most glorious  
 To reign o'er all victorious.  
 Hosanna, praise, and glory!  
 Our King, we bow before Thee.

—O Bride of Christ, Rejoice  
 (LSB 335:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, You knit together Your faithful people of all times and places into one holy communion, the mystical body of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Grant us so to follow Your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living that, together with them, we may come to the unspeakable joys You have prepared for those who love You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F34)

## All Saints' Day

This feast is the most comprehensive of saints' days, encompassing the entire scope of that great cloud of witnesses with which we are surrounded (Hebrews 12:1). It holds before the eyes of faith that great multitude which no man can number: all the saints of God in Christ—from every nation, race, culture, and language—who have come “out of the great tribulation,” “who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9, 14). As such, it sets before us the full height and depth and breadth and length of our dear Lord's gracious salvation (Ephesians 3:17–19). It shares with Easter a celebration of the resurrection, since all those who have

died with Christ Jesus have also been raised with Him (Romans 6:3–8). It shares with Pentecost a celebration of the ingathering of the entire Church catholic—in heaven and on earth, in all times and places—in the one Body of Christ, in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Just as we have all been called to the one hope that belongs to our call, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4–6). And the Feast of All Saints shares with the final Sundays of the Church Year an eschatological focus on the life everlasting and a confession that “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18). In all of these emphases, the purpose of this feast is to fix our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, that we might not grow weary or fainthearted (Hebrews 12:2–3).

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XXIV (XII) 27–29

## 2 NOVEMBER

## Psalmody

<sup>22</sup>The stone that the builders re- | jected\*  
 has become the | cornerstone.

<sup>23</sup>This is the LORD's | doing;\*  
 it is marvelous | in our eyes.

<sup>24</sup>This is the day that the | LORD has made;\*  
 let us rejoice and be | glad in it.  
 —Psalm 118:22–24

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 118*

**Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 1:1–19**

<sup>1</sup>The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, <sup>2</sup>to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. <sup>3</sup>It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

The Call of Jeremiah

<sup>4</sup>Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

<sup>5</sup>“Before I formed you in the womb  
I knew you,  
and before you were born  
I consecrated you;  
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

<sup>6</sup>Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.”

<sup>7</sup>But the Lord said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’;  
for to all to whom I send you,  
you shall go,  
and whatever I command you,  
you shall speak.

<sup>8</sup>Do not be afraid of them,  
for I am with you to deliver you,  
declares the LORD.”

<sup>9</sup>Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me,

“Behold, I have put my words  
in your mouth.

<sup>10</sup>See, I have set you this day  
over nations and over kingdoms,  
to pluck up and to break down,  
to destroy and to overthrow,  
to build and to plant.”

<sup>11</sup>And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see an almond branch.” <sup>12</sup>Then the LORD said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.”

<sup>13</sup>The word of the LORD came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.” <sup>14</sup>Then the LORD said to me, “Out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land. <sup>15</sup>For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, declares the LORD, and they shall come, and every one shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah. <sup>16</sup>And I will declare my judgments against them, for all their evil in forsaking me. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands. <sup>17</sup>But you, dress yourself for work; arise, and say to them everything that I command you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them. <sup>18</sup>And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land. <sup>19</sup>They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the LORD, to deliver you.”

**New Testament Reading:  
Matthew 21:23–46**

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

<sup>23</sup>And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”

<sup>24</sup>Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup>The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ <sup>26</sup>But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” <sup>27</sup>So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

<sup>28</sup>“What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ <sup>29</sup>And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup>And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. <sup>31</sup>Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup>For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

The Parable of the Tenants

<sup>33</sup>“Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country.

<sup>34</sup>When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. <sup>35</sup>And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

<sup>36</sup>Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them.

<sup>37</sup>Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ <sup>38</sup>But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ <sup>39</sup>And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. <sup>40</sup>When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” <sup>41</sup>They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

<sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

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

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

<sup>45</sup>When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. <sup>46</sup>And although they were seeking to arrest him,

they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

## Writing

It is of the utmost importance that we highly esteem, honor, and rely upon the holy sacraments, which contain nothing but God's words, promises, and signs. This means that we have no doubts about the sacraments or the things of which they are certain signs, for if we doubt these we lose everything. Christ says that it will happen to us as we believe. What will it profit you to assume and to believe that sin, death, and hell are overcome in Christ for others, but not to believe that your sin, your death, and your hell are also vanquished and wiped out and that you are thus redeemed? Under those circumstances the sacraments will be completely fruitless, since you do not believe the things which are indicated, given, and promised there to you. That is the vilest sin that can be committed, for God himself is looked upon as a liar in his Word, signs, and works, as one who speaks, shows, and promises something which he neither means nor intends to keep. Therefore we dare not trifle with the sacraments. Faith must be present for a firm reliance and cheerful venturing on such signs and promises of God. What sort of a God or Savior would he be who could not or would not save us from sin, death, and hell? Whatever the true God promises and effects must be something big.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

My song is love unknown,  
My Savior's love to me,  
Love to the loveless shown  
That they might lovingly be.  
Oh, who am I  
That for my sake  
My Lord should take  
Frail flesh and die?

—My Song Is Love Unknown  
(LSB 430:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, You gave Your Son into the hands of sinful men who killed Him. Forgive us when we reject Your unfailing love, and grant us the fullness of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
(A80)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIV (XII) 30–34

## 3 NOVEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, who shall sojourn | in your tent?\*  
Who shall dwell on your | holy hill?
- <sup>2</sup> He who walks blamelessly and does | what  
is right\*  
and speaks truth | in his heart;
- <sup>3</sup> who does not slander with his tongue  
and does no evil to his | neighbor,\*  
nor takes up a reproach a- | gainst  
his friend;

<sup>4</sup>in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who | fear the LORD;\* who swears to his own hurt and | does not change;

<sup>5</sup>who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the | innocent.\*

He who does these things shall nev- | er be moved.

—Psalm 15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 26*

### Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 3:6–4:2

Faithless Israel Called to Repentance

<sup>6</sup>The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? <sup>7</sup>And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. <sup>8</sup>She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. <sup>9</sup>Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. <sup>10</sup>Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the LORD.”

<sup>11</sup>And the LORD said to me, “Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. <sup>12</sup>Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say,

“ ‘Return, faithless Israel,  
declares the LORD.

I will not look on you in anger,

for I am merciful,  
declares the LORD;

I will not be angry forever.

<sup>13</sup>Only acknowledge your guilt,  
that you rebelled against the LORD  
your God

and scattered your favors among  
foreigners under every green tree,  
and that you have not obeyed  
my voice,  
declares the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>Return, O faithless children,  
declares the Lord;  
for I am your master;

I will take you, one from a city  
and two from a family,  
and I will bring you to Zion.

<sup>15</sup>“ ‘And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. <sup>16</sup>And when you have multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, “The ark of the covenant of the LORD.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. <sup>17</sup>At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. <sup>18</sup>In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.

<sup>19</sup>“ ‘I said,  
How I would set you among my sons,  
and give you a pleasant land,  
a heritage most beautiful  
of all nations.

And I thought you would call me,  
My Father,

and would not turn  
from following me.

<sup>20</sup>Surely, as a treacherous wife  
leaves her husband,  
so have you been treacherous to me,  
O house of Israel,  
declares the LORD.’ ”

<sup>21</sup>A voice on the bare heights is heard,  
the weeping and pleading  
of Israel’s sons  
because they have perverted their way;  
they have forgotten the LORD  
their God.

<sup>22</sup>“Return, O faithless sons;  
I will heal your faithlessness.”  
“Behold, we come to you,  
for you are the LORD our God.

<sup>23</sup>Truly the hills are a delusion,  
the orgies on the mountains.  
Truly in the LORD our God  
is the salvation of Israel.

<sup>24</sup>“But from our youth the shameful  
thing has devoured all for which our fathers  
labored, their flocks and their herds, their  
sons and their daughters. <sup>25</sup>Let us lie down in  
our shame, and let our dishonor cover us. For  
we have sinned against the LORD our God,  
we and our fathers, from our youth even to  
this day, and we have not obeyed the voice of  
the LORD our God.”

<sup>4:1</sup>“If you return, O Israel,  
declares the LORD,  
to me you should return.

If you remove your detestable things  
from my presence,  
and do not waver,

<sup>2</sup>and if you swear, ‘As the LORD lives,’

in truth, in justice,  
and in righteousness,  
then nations shall bless themselves  
in him,  
and in him shall they glory.”

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 22:1–22

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

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

<sup>11</sup>“But when the king came in to look  
at the guests, he saw there a man who had  
no wedding garment. <sup>12</sup>And he said to him,  
‘Friend, how did you get in here without a  
wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.  
<sup>13</sup>Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind  
him hand and foot and cast him into the  
outer darkness. In that place there will be

weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ <sup>14</sup>For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Paying Taxes to Caesar

<sup>15</sup>Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. <sup>16</sup>And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone’s opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. <sup>17</sup>Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” <sup>18</sup>But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? <sup>19</sup>Show me the coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. <sup>20</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” <sup>21</sup>They said, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” <sup>22</sup>When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

**Writing**

Children should be constantly urged and moved to honor God’s name and to have it always upon their lips for everything that may happen to them or come to their notice [Psalm 8:2; 34:1; Matthew 21:16; Hebrews 13:15]. For that is the true honor of His name, to look to it and call upon it for all consolation [Psalm 66:2; 105:1]. Then—as we have heard in the First Commandment—the heart by faith gives God the honor due Him first. Afterward, the lips give Him honor by confession.

This is also a blessed and useful habit and very effective against the devil. He is ever around us and lies in wait to bring us into sin and shame, disaster and trouble [2 Timothy

2:26]. But he hates to hear God’s name and cannot remain long where it is spoken and called upon from the heart. Indeed, many terrible and shocking disasters would fall upon us if God did not preserve us by our calling upon His name. I have tried it myself. I learned by experience that often sudden great suffering was immediately averted and removed by calling on God. To confuse the devil, I say, we should always have this holy name in our mouth, so that the devil may not be able to injure us as he wishes.

It is also useful that we form the habit of daily commending ourselves to God [Psalm 31:5], with soul and body, wife, children, servants, and all that we have, against every need that may arise. So also the blessing and thanksgiving at meals [Mark 8:6] and other prayers, morning and evening, have begun and remained in use [Exodus 29:38–43]. Likewise, children should continue to cross themselves when anything monstrous or terrible is seen or heard. They can shout, “Lord God, protect us!” “Help, dear Lord Jesus!” and such. Also, if anyone meets with unexpected good fortune, however trivial, he says, “God be praised and thanked!” or “God has bestowed this on me!”

—Large Catechism I 70–74

**Hymnody**

You see my sin yet seat me at Your table;  
 Lord, as a guest, I surely am the least:  
 Unclean, unfit, of worthy deeds unable—  
 My heart prepare for this most holy feast,  
 My heart prepare for this most holy feast.

—O Gracious Lord, I Firmly Am  
 Believing (*LSB* 635:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You invite us to trust in You for our salvation. Deal with us not in the severity of Your judgment but by the greatness of Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A81)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIV (XII) 35–40

## 4 NOVEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>The LORD says to my Lord:  
“Sit at my | right hand,\*  
until I make your enemies  
your | footstool.”
- <sup>2</sup>he LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty | scepter.\*  
Rule in the midst of your | enemies!
- <sup>3</sup>Your people will offer themselves freely  
on the day of your power,  
in holy | garments,\*  
from the womb of the morning,  
the dew of your youth | will be yours.
- <sup>4</sup>The LORD has sworn and  
will not | change his mind,\*  
“You are a priest forever  
after the order of Mel- | chizedek.”
- <sup>5</sup>The Lord is at your | right hand,\*  
he will shatter kings  
on the day | of his wrath.
- <sup>6</sup>He will execute judgment among the  
nations, filling them with | corpses;\*  
he will shatter chiefs  
over the | wide earth.

<sup>7</sup>He will drink from the brook | by the way;\*  
therefore he will lift | up his head.

—Psalm 110

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 108*

## Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 5:1–19

Jerusalem Refused to Repent

- <sup>1</sup>Run to and fro through the streets of  
Jerusalem,  
look and take note!  
Search her squares to see  
if you can find a man,  
one who does justice  
and seeks truth,  
that I may pardon her.
- <sup>2</sup>Though they say, “As the LORD lives,”  
yet they swear falsely.
- <sup>3</sup>O LORD, do not your eyes look for truth?  
You have struck them down,  
but they felt no anguish;  
you have consumed them,  
but they refused to take correction.  
They have made their faces  
harder than rock;  
they have refused to repent.
- <sup>4</sup>Then I said, “These are only the poor;  
they have no sense;  
for they do not know the way  
of the LORD,  
the justice of their God.
- <sup>5</sup>I will go to the great  
and will speak to them,  
for they know the way of the Lord,  
the justice of their God.”  
But they all alike had broken the yoke;  
they had burst the bonds.
- <sup>6</sup>Therefore a lion from the forest shall  
strike them down;

a wolf from the desert  
shall devastate them.

A leopard is watching their cities;  
everyone who goes out of them  
shall be torn in pieces,  
because their transgressions are many,  
their apostasies are great.

<sup>7</sup>“How can I pardon you?  
Your children have forsaken me  
and have sworn by those  
who are no gods.

When I fed them to the full,  
they committed adultery  
and trooped to the houses of whores.

<sup>8</sup>They were well-fed, lusty stallions,  
each neighing for his neighbor’s wife.

<sup>9</sup>Shall I not punish them for these things?  
declares the LORD;  
and shall I not avenge myself  
on a nation such as this?

<sup>10</sup>“Go up through her vine rows  
and destroy,  
but make not a full end;  
strip away her branches,  
for they are not the LORD’s.

<sup>11</sup>For the house of Israel  
and the house of Judah  
have been utterly treacherous to me,  
declares the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>They have spoken falsely of the LORD  
and have said, ‘He will do nothing;  
no disaster will come upon us,  
nor shall we see sword or famine.

<sup>13</sup>The prophets will become wind;  
the word is not in them.

Thus shall it be done to them!’ ”

The LORD Proclaims Judgment

<sup>14</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD,  
the God of hosts:

“Because you have spoken this word,

behold, I am making my words  
in your mouth a fire,  
and this people wood,  
and the fire shall consume them.

<sup>15</sup>Behold, I am bringing against you  
a nation from afar, O house of Israel,  
declares the Lord.

It is an enduring nation;  
it is an ancient nation,  
a nation whose language  
you do not know,  
nor can you understand  
what they say.

<sup>16</sup>Their quiver is like an open tomb;  
they are all mighty warriors.

<sup>17</sup>They shall eat up your harvest  
and your food;  
they shall eat up your sons  
and your daughters;  
they shall eat up your flocks  
and your herds;  
they shall eat up your vines [and your  
fig trees;  
your fortified cities in which you trust  
they shall beat down  
with the sword.”

<sup>18</sup>“But even in those days, declares the  
LORD, I will not make a full end of you.

<sup>19</sup>And when your people say, ‘Why has the  
LORD our God done all these things to us?’  
you shall say to them, ‘As you have forsaken  
me and served foreign gods in your land,  
so you shall serve foreigners in a land that  
is not yours.’ ”

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 22:23–46**

Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection

<sup>23</sup>The same day Sadducees came to  
him, who say that there is no resurrection,

and they asked him a question, <sup>24</sup>saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.’ <sup>25</sup>Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. <sup>26</sup>So too the second and third, down to the seventh. <sup>27</sup>After them all, the woman died. <sup>28</sup>In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her.”

<sup>29</sup>But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. <sup>30</sup>For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. <sup>31</sup>And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: <sup>32</sup>‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.” <sup>33</sup>And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

#### The Great Commandment

<sup>34</sup>But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. <sup>35</sup>And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup>“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup>And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

#### Whose Son Is the Christ?

<sup>41</sup>Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, <sup>42</sup>saying, “What do you think about the

Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” <sup>43</sup>He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

<sup>44</sup>“The Lord said to my Lord,  
Sit at my right hand,  
until I put your enemies  
under your feet?”

<sup>45</sup>If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” <sup>46</sup>And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

#### Writing

[Luther] taught that good works do not save a person, but only faith, without good works. . . . He did not say that, to be saved, a person must have faith and, in addition to that, good works, or love; but he did teach that those who would be saved must have a faith *that produces love spontaneously and is fruitful in good works*. That does not mean that faith saves on account of love which springs from it, but that the faith which the Holy Spirit creates and which cannot but do good works justifies because it clings to the gracious promises of Christ and because it lays hold of Christ. It is active in good works because it is genuine faith. The believer need not at all be exhorted to do good works; his faith does them automatically. The believer engages in good works, not from a sense of duty, in return for the forgiveness of his sins, but chiefly because he cannot help doing them. It is altogether impossible that genuine faith should not break forth from the believer’s heart in works of love.

—C. F. W. Walther

## Hymnody

I am content! My Jesus ever lives,  
 In whom my heart is pleased.  
 He has fulfilled the Law of God for me,  
 God's wrath He has appeased.  
 Since He in death could perish never,  
 I also shall not die forever.  
 I am content!  
 I am content!

—I Am Content! My Jesus Ever Lives  
 (LSB 468:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You have commanded us to love  
 You above all things and our neighbors as  
 ourselves. Grant us the Spirit to think and do  
 what is pleasing in Your sight, that our faith  
 in You may never waver and our love for one  
 another may not falter; through Jesus Christ,  
 Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns  
 with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now  
 and forever. (A83)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XXIV (XII) 41–51

## 5 NOVEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>9</sup> O Lord, all my longing is be- | fore you,\*  
 my sighing is not hid- | den from you.  
<sup>10</sup> My heart throbs; my strength | fails me,\*  
 and the light of my eyes—it also  
 has | gone from me.  
<sup>11</sup> My friends and companions stand  
 aloof | from my plague,\*  
 and my nearest kin stand | far off.

- <sup>12</sup> Those who seek my life lay their snares;  
 those who seek my hurt speak of | ruin\*  
 and meditate treachery | all day long.  
<sup>13</sup> But I am like a deaf man; I | do not hear,\*  
 like a mute man  
 who does not o- | pen his mouth.  
<sup>14</sup> I have become like a man  
 who | does not hear,\*  
 and in whose mouth are | no rebukes.  
<sup>15</sup> But for you, O LORD, | do I wait;\*  
 it is you, O Lord my God,  
 who will | answer.  
<sup>16</sup> For I said, “Only let them  
 not rejoice | over me,\*  
 who boast against me  
 when my | foot slips!”  
<sup>17</sup> For I am read- | y to fall,\*  
 and my pain is ever be- | fore me.  
<sup>18</sup> I confess my in- | iquity,\*  
 I am sorry | for my sin.  
<sup>19</sup> But my foes are vigorous,  
 they are | mighty,\*  
 and many are those  
 who hate me | wrongfully.  
<sup>20</sup> Those who render me e- | vil for good\*  
 accuse me because I follow | after good.  
<sup>21</sup> Do not forsake me, | O LORD!\*  
 O my God, be not | far from me!  
<sup>22</sup> Make haste to | help me,\*  
 O Lord, my sal- | vation!  
 —Psalm 38:9–22

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 38*

## Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 7:1–29

Evil in the Land

<sup>1</sup>The word that came to Jeremiah from  
 the LORD: <sup>2</sup>“Stand in the gate of the LORD’s  
 house, and proclaim there this word, and say,  
 Hear the word of the LORD, all you men of  
 Judah who enter these gates to worship the

LORD. <sup>3</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. <sup>4</sup>Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’

<sup>5</sup>‘For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, <sup>6</sup>if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, <sup>7</sup>then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.

<sup>8</sup>‘Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. <sup>9</sup>Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, <sup>10</sup>and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’—only to go on doing all these abominations? <sup>11</sup>Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD. <sup>12</sup>Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel. <sup>13</sup>And now, because you have done all these things, declares the LORD, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, <sup>14</sup>therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. <sup>15</sup>And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen, all the offspring of Ephraim.

<sup>16</sup>‘As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear

you. <sup>17</sup>Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? <sup>18</sup>The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven. And they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger. <sup>19</sup>Is it I whom they provoke? declares the Lord. Is it not themselves, to their own shame?

<sup>20</sup>Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground; it will burn and not be quenched.”

<sup>21</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. <sup>22</sup>For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. <sup>23</sup>But this command I gave them: ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’ <sup>24</sup>But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. <sup>25</sup>From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. <sup>26</sup>Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

<sup>27</sup>“So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. <sup>28</sup>And you shall say to them, ‘This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, and did not accept

discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.

<sup>29</sup>“Cut off your hair and cast it away; raise a lamentation on the bare heights, for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.’ ”

**New Testament Reading:  
Matthew 23:1–12**

Seven Woes to the Scribes and Pharisees

<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup>“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, <sup>3</sup>so practice and observe whatever they tell you—but not what they do. For they preach, but do not practice. <sup>4</sup>They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. <sup>5</sup>They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, <sup>6</sup>and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues <sup>7</sup>and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. <sup>8</sup>But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup>And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup>Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. <sup>11</sup>The greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup>Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

**Writing**

Moses is a minister of the Law, sin, and death; for he teaches and stresses works, and through the rays of the Law he makes everyone guilty of death and subject to

punishment for sin. He demands, but he does not give what he demands. However, since this Prophet finds Moses teaching this and is Himself set up as a Teacher next to him, His Word must teach something else. But He cannot teach anything else than sin, wrath, and death unless He teaches righteousness, grace, and life. Therefore it is necessary that He be a teacher of life, grace, and righteousness, just as Moses is a teacher of sin, wrath, and death. But both teachings must be heard just as they have been raised up by God; for through the Law all must be humbled, and through the Gospel all must be exalted. They are alike in divine authority, but with respect to the fruit of their ministry they are unlike and completely opposed to each other. The sin and wrath which Moses arouses through his ministry that Prophet cancels through righteousness and grace by His ministry. This Prophet, therefore, demands nothing; but He grants what Moses demands.

In this passage we have those two ministries of the Word which are necessary for the salvation of the human race: the ministry of the Law and the ministry of the Gospel, one for death and the other for life. They are indeed alike if you are looking at their authority, but most unlike if you are thinking about their fruit. The ministry of Moses is temporary, finally to be ended by the coming of the ministry of Christ, as he says here, “Heed Him.” But the ministry of Christ will be ended by nothing else, since it brings eternal righteousness and “puts an end to sin,” as it is said in Dan. 9:24. . . . Thus this Prophet can be none other than Christ Himself.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Come, very Sun of truth and love;  
 Pour down Thy radiance from above  
 And shed the Holy Spirit's ray  
 On all we think or do or say.  
 Alleluia!

—O Splendor of God's Glory Bright  
 (LSB 874:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful and gracious Lord, You cause Your Word to be proclaimed in every generation. Stir up our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may receive this proclamation with humility and finally be exalted at the coming of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A84)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XXIV (XII) 52–59

## 6 NOVEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>25</sup> Save us, we pray, | O LORD!\*  
 O LORD, we pray, give | us success!
- <sup>26</sup> Blessèd is he who comes  
 in the name | of the LORD!\*  
 We bless you from the house | of the LORD.
- <sup>27</sup> The LORD is God, and he has made his light  
 to shine up- | on us.\*  
 Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,  
 up to the horns of the | altar!
- <sup>28</sup> You are my God,  
 and I will give | thanks to you;\*

you are my God; I will ex- | tol you.

- <sup>29</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD,  
 for | he is good;\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!  
 —Psalm 118:25–29

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 118*

## Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 8:18–9:12

Jeremiah Grieves for His People

<sup>18</sup> My joy is gone; grief is upon me;  
 my heart is sick within me.

<sup>19</sup> Behold, the cry of the daughter  
 of my people  
 from the length and breadth  
 of the land:

“Is the LORD not in Zion?  
 Is her King not in her?”

“Why have they provoked me  
 to anger with their carved images  
 and with their foreign idols?”

<sup>20</sup> “The harvest is past,  
 the summer is ended,  
 and we are not saved.”

<sup>21</sup> For the wound of the daughter  
 of my people is my heart wounded;  
 I mourn, and dismay  
 has taken hold on me.

<sup>22</sup> Is there no balm in Gilead?  
 Is there no physician there?

Why then has the health  
 of the daughter of my people  
 not been restored?

<sup>9:1</sup> Oh that my head were waters,  
 and my eyes a fountain of tears,  
 that I might weep day and night  
 for the slain of the daughter  
 of my people!

<sup>2</sup> Oh that I had in the desert

a travelers' lodging place,  
 that I might leave my people  
 and go away from them!  
 For they are all adulterers,  
 a company of treacherous men.  
<sup>3</sup>They bend their tongue like a bow;  
 falsehood and not truth has grown  
 strong in the land;  
 for they proceed from evil to evil,  
 and they do not know me,  
 declares the LORD.

<sup>4</sup>Let everyone beware of his neighbor,  
 and put no trust in any brother,  
 for every brother is a deceiver,  
 and every neighbor goes about  
 as a slanderer.

<sup>5</sup>Everyone deceives his neighbor,  
 and no one speaks the truth;  
 they have taught their tongue  
 to speak lies;  
 they weary themselves  
 committing iniquity.

<sup>6</sup>Heaping oppression upon oppression,  
 and deceit upon deceit,  
 they refuse to know me,  
 declares the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts:  
 "Behold, I will refine them and test them,  
 for what else can I do,  
 because of my people?"

<sup>8</sup>Their tongue is a deadly arrow;  
 it speaks deceitfully;  
 with his mouth each speaks peace  
 to his neighbor,  
 but in his heart he plans  
 an ambush for him.

<sup>9</sup>Shall I not punish them for these things?  
 declares the LORD,  
 and shall I not avenge myself  
 on a nation such as this?

<sup>10</sup>"I will take up weeping and wailing  
 for the mountains,  
 and a lamentation for the pastures  
 of the wilderness,  
 because they are laid waste so that no one  
 passes through,  
 and the lowing of cattle is not heard;  
 both the birds of the air and the beasts  
 have fled and are gone.

<sup>11</sup>I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins,  
 a lair of jackals,  
 and I will make the cities  
 of Judah a desolation,  
 without inhabitant."

<sup>12</sup>Who is the man so wise that he can  
 understand this? To whom has the mouth  
 of the LORD spoken, that he may declare it?  
 Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a  
 wilderness, so that no one passes through?

**New Testament Reading:**  
**Matthew 23:13–39**

[Seven Woes to the Scribes and Pharisees]

<sup>13</sup>"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,  
 hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of  
 heaven in people's faces. For you neither  
 enter yourselves nor allow those who would  
 enter to go in. <sup>15</sup>Woe to you, scribes and  
 Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across  
 sea and land to make a single proselyte, and  
 when he becomes a proselyte, you make him  
 twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

<sup>16</sup>"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If  
 anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing,  
 but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple,  
 he is bound by his oath.' <sup>17</sup>You blind fools! For  
 which is greater, the gold or the temple that  
 has made the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup>And you say, 'If  
 anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if  
 anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar,

he is bound by his oath.’<sup>19</sup> You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup>So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup>And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup>And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

<sup>23</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup>You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

<sup>25</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup>You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

<sup>27</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup>So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

<sup>29</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup>saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ <sup>31</sup>Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup>Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. <sup>33</sup>You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? <sup>34</sup>Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes,

some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, <sup>35</sup>so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup>Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Lament over Jerusalem

<sup>37</sup>“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! <sup>38</sup>See, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>39</sup>For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

## Writing

[Jesus] directs His speech to the city, in this way also being mindful to correct His hearers, and says, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!” What does the repetition mean? This is a way of expressing His pity for her and bemoaning her and greatly loving her. Like a woman ever loved by Him, but she has despised the One who loved her, and therefore she is on the point of being punished. Being now about to inflict the punishment, He pleads with her. This is also the pattern of the prophets, who said, “Turn to me, and she returned not.”

Then having called her, Jesus tells of her blood-stained deeds, “You who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you, how often would I have gathered your children together, and you would not.” In this way He is also explaining His own dealings with her. Not even with these things

has He turned her aside nor withdrawn His great affection toward her, but it was His desire even so, not once or twice but often, to draw her to Himself. “For how often would I,” says He, “have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks, and you would not.” He says this to show that they were ever scattering themselves by their sins. He indicates His affection by similitude; for indeed the hen is warm in its love toward its brood. Everywhere in the prophets it is this same image of the wings, and in the song of Moses and in the Psalms, indicating God’s great protection and care.

—John Chrysostom

### Hymnody

A glorious band, the chosen few,  
On whom the Spirit came,  
Twelve valiant saints—their hope they knew  
And mocked the cross and flame.  
They met the tyrant’s brandished steel,  
The lion’s gory mane;  
They bowed their necks their death to feel—  
Who follows in their train?

—The Son of God Goes Forth to War  
(LSB 661:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, the holy city of Jerusalem rejected the prophets and stoned those who were sent to her, killing Your Son, the final prophet sent to redeem her and the whole world from their sins. Through His innocent suffering and death, gather Your Church into His loving embrace that we may truly be the Body of Christ; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1103)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIV (XII) 60–67

## 7 NOVEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes | to the hills.\*  
From where does my | help come?
- <sup>2</sup> My help comes | from the LORD,\*  
who made | heaven and earth.
- <sup>3</sup> He will not let your | foot be moved;\*  
he who keeps you will not | slumber.
- <sup>4</sup> Behold, he who keeps | Israel\*  
will neither slum- | ber nor sleep.
- <sup>5</sup> The LORD is your | keeper;\*  
the LORD is your shade on your | right  
hand.
- <sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike | you by day,\*  
nor the | moon by night.
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all | evil,\*  
he will | keep your life.
- <sup>8</sup> The LORD will keep your going out  
and your | coming in\*  
from this time forth and for- | evermore.  
—Psalm 121

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 135*

### Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 11:1–23

The Broken Covenant

<sup>1</sup>The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup>“Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>You shall say to them, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man who does not hear the

words of this covenant <sup>4</sup>that I commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Listen to my voice, and do all that I command you. So shall you be my people, and I will be your God, <sup>5</sup>that I may confirm the oath that I swore to your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as at this day.” Then I answered, “So be it, LORD.”

<sup>6</sup>And the LORD said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: Hear the words of this covenant and do them. <sup>7</sup>For I solemnly warned your fathers when I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, warning them persistently, even to this day, saying, Obey my voice. <sup>8</sup>Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone walked in the stubbornness of his evil heart. Therefore I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did not.”

<sup>9</sup>Again the LORD said to me, “A conspiracy exists among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear my words. They have gone after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant that I made with their fathers. <sup>11</sup>Therefore, thus says the LORD, Behold, I am bringing disaster upon them that they cannot escape. Though they cry to me, I will not listen to them. <sup>12</sup>Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the gods to whom they make offerings, but they cannot save them in the time of their trouble. <sup>13</sup>For your gods have become as many as your cities, O Judah, and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to shame, altars to make offerings to Baal.

<sup>14</sup>“Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer on their behalf, for I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their trouble. <sup>15</sup>What right has my beloved in my house, when she has done many vile deeds? Can even sacrificial flesh avert your doom? Can you then exult? <sup>16</sup>The Lord once called you ‘a green olive tree, beautiful with good fruit.’ But with the roar of a great tempest he will set fire to it, and its branches will be consumed. <sup>17</sup>The LORD of hosts, who planted you, has decreed disaster against you, because of the evil that the house of Israel and the house of Judah have done, provoking me to anger by making offerings to Baal.”

<sup>18</sup>The LORD made it known to me and I knew;

then you showed me their deeds.

<sup>19</sup>But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.

I did not know it was against me

they devised schemes, saying,

“Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more.”

<sup>20</sup>But, O LORD of hosts,

who judges righteously,

who tests the heart and the mind,

let me see your vengeance upon them,

for to you have I committed

my cause.

<sup>21</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the men of Anathoth, who seek your life, and say, “Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, or you will die by our hand”—<sup>22</sup>therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: “Behold, I will punish them. The

young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine, <sup>23</sup>and none of them shall be left. For I will bring disaster upon the men of Anathoth, the year of their punishment.”

*Additional Reading: Jeremiah 12:1–19:15*

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 24:1–28**

Jesus Foretells Destruction of the Temple

<sup>1</sup>Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup>But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

Signs of the Close of the Age

<sup>3</sup>As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?” <sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. <sup>5</sup>For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. <sup>6</sup>And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup>All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

<sup>9</sup>“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. <sup>10</sup>And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup>And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. <sup>12</sup>And because lawlessness will be

increased, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup>But the one who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup>And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The Abomination of Desolation

<sup>15</sup>“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), <sup>16</sup>then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup>Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, <sup>18</sup>and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. <sup>19</sup>And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! <sup>20</sup>Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. <sup>21</sup>For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. <sup>22</sup>And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. <sup>23</sup>Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. <sup>24</sup>For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. <sup>25</sup>See, I have told you beforehand. <sup>26</sup>So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. <sup>27</sup>For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup>Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”

## Writing

Although the factions in Christendom have different beliefs, there is none that does not accord Christ His rightful place as the author and authority of its doctrines. . . . [The Church] even appears to be flourishing. Thus the person who regards the present as the horrible end times is thought to be greatly mistaken. But appearances can be deceiving. The cry of “Here is Christ! There is Christ!” that resounds from so many pulpits is precisely what makes our age so dangerous and abominable, and it demonstrates that the final, evil days of the world are approaching. For it is mostly a false Christ who is now being preached and praised in order to deceive even the elect. There are now many preachers and laity, both learned and unlearned individuals, who no longer believe the Bible is God’s Word and faith in Christ is the only way to salvation. With their own imagined virtue and good works, they believe that they have made God their debtor, that He must rightfully receive them into heaven after their death, and that He must eternally reward them. They do not want to think of themselves as sinners who are in need of a Savior. The Word of the cross is foolishness and a stumbling block to them. . . .

For wherever one preaches Christ as a mere man and not as the true God, fully of the same substance, power, and glory as the heavenly Father, one preaches a false Christ. Wherever one presents Christ only as an example and as a teacher of wisdom and virtue, and not as the Lamb of God who died on the cross for the sins of the world and thereby reconciled mankind with the heavenly Father, one preaches a false Christ. And whoever accepts this Christ of the

unbelievers has forsaken the true Christ and placed his confidence in a dream being, one who never existed except in the imagination of unbelieving fools. Christ Himself says, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30), “Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9), and “all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father” (John 5:23).

—C. F. W. Walther

## Hymnody

O Thou, whose coming is with dread  
To judge the living and the dead,  
Preserve us from the ancient foe  
While still we dwell on earth below.

—Creator of the Stars of Night  
(*LSB* 351:5)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, when You were lifted up on the cross, the entire world experienced birth pains as the cosmos was rocked as Your death gave birth to a new creation. Focus our eyes on Your holy cross that we may see it as a tree of life preparing us for Your final coming in judgment as the Son of Man; for You live and reign with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1104)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIV (XII) 68–77

**8 NOVEMBER**

*Johannes von Staupitz, Luther's Father  
Confessor*

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup>Hear my prayer, O LORD;  
give ear to my pleas for | mercy!\*  
In your faithfulness answer me,  
in your | righteousness!
- <sup>2</sup>Enter not into judgment  
with your | servant,\*  
for no one living is righteous  
be- | fore you.
- <sup>3</sup>For the enemy has pursued my soul;  
he has crushed my life | to the ground;\*  
he has made me sit in darkness  
like | those long dead.
- <sup>4</sup>Therefore my spirit faints with- | in me;\*  
my heart within me | is appalled.
- <sup>5</sup>I remember the days of old;  
I meditate on all that | you have done;\*  
I ponder the work | of your hands.
- <sup>6</sup>I stretch out my | hands to you;\*  
my soul thirsts for you like  
a | parched land.
- <sup>7</sup>Answer me quickly, O LORD!  
My | spirit fails!\*  
Hide not your face from me, lest I be like  
those who go down | to the pit.
- <sup>8</sup>Let me hear in the morning of your  
steadfast love, for in | you I trust.\*  
Make me know the way I should go,  
for to you I lift | up my soul.
- <sup>9</sup>Deliver me from my enemies, | O LORD!\*  
I have fled to you for | refuge!
- <sup>10</sup>Teach me to do your will,  
for you | are my God!\*  
Let your good Spirit lead me  
on | level ground!
- <sup>11</sup>For your name's sake,  
O LORD, pre- | serve my life!\*

In your righteousness bring my soul  
out of | trouble!

- <sup>12</sup>And in your steadfast love you will  
cut off my | enemies,\*  
and you will destroy all the adversaries  
of my soul, for I am your | servant.  
—Psalm 143

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 144*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Jeremiah 20:1–18**

Jeremiah Persecuted by Pashhur

<sup>1</sup>Now Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. <sup>2</sup>Then Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the upper Benjamin Gate of the house of the LORD. <sup>3</sup>The next day, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “The LORD does not call your name Pashhur, but Terror On Every Side. <sup>4</sup>For thus says the LORD: Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. They shall fall by the sword of their enemies while you look on. And I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon. He shall carry them captive to Babylon, and shall strike them down with the sword. <sup>5</sup>Moreover, I will give all the wealth of the city, all its gains, all its prized belongings, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into the hand of their enemies, who shall plunder them and seize them and carry them to Babylon. <sup>6</sup>And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity. To Babylon you shall go, and there you shall die, and there you shall be buried, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied falsely.”

<sup>7</sup>O LORD, you have deceived me,  
 and I was deceived;  
 you are stronger than I,  
 and you have prevailed.  
 I have become a laughingstock all the day;  
 everyone mocks me.

<sup>8</sup>For whenever I speak, I cry out,  
 I shout, "Violence and destruction!"  
 For the word of the LORD  
 has become for me  
 a reproach and derision all day long.

<sup>9</sup>If I say, "I will not mention him,  
 or speak any more in his name,"  
 there is in my heart  
 as it were a burning fire  
 shut up in my bones,  
 and I am weary with holding it in,  
 and I cannot.

<sup>10</sup>For I hear many whispering.  
 Terror is on every side!  
 "Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"  
 say all my close friends,  
 watching for my fall.  
 "Perhaps he will be deceived;  
 then we can overcome him  
 and take our revenge on him."

<sup>11</sup>But the LORD is with me  
 as a dread warrior;  
 therefore my persecutors  
 will stumble;  
 they will not overcome me.  
 They will be greatly shamed,  
 for they will not succeed.  
 Their eternal dishonor  
 will never be forgotten.

<sup>12</sup>O LORD of hosts,  
 who tests the righteous,  
 who sees the heart and the mind,  
 let me see your vengeance upon them,  
 for to you have I committed  
 my cause.

<sup>13</sup>Sing to the LORD;  
 praise the LORD!  
 For he has delivered the life of the needy  
 from the hand of evildoers.

<sup>14</sup>Cursed be the day  
 on which I was born!  
 The day when my mother bore me,  
 let it not be blessed!

<sup>15</sup>Cursed be the man who brought the  
 news to my father,  
 "A son is born to you,"  
 making him very glad.

<sup>16</sup>Let that man be like the cities  
 that the Lord overthrew without pity;  
 let him hear a cry in the morning  
 and an alarm at noon,  
<sup>17</sup>because he did not kill me in the womb;  
 so my mother would have been  
 my grave,  
 and her womb forever great.

<sup>18</sup>Why did I come out from the womb  
 to see toil and sorrow,  
 and spend my days in shame?

### **New Testament Reading:** **Matthew 24:29–51**

The Coming of the Son of Man

<sup>29</sup>"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup>Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup>And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

<sup>32</sup>“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>33</sup>So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>34</sup>Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>35</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

No One Knows That Day and Hour

<sup>36</sup>“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. <sup>37</sup>For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup>For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup>and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup>Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. <sup>41</sup>Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. <sup>42</sup>Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup>But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup>Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

<sup>45</sup>“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? <sup>46</sup>Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>47</sup>Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. <sup>48</sup>But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ <sup>49</sup>and

begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, <sup>50</sup>the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know <sup>51</sup>and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

**Writing**

Hence, not only are sins forgiven in baptism, but we are also made sure and certain that God is so well pleased with it that he, together with Christ and his Holy Spirit, proposes to be present when it is administered and he himself will be the baptizer; although this glorious revelation of the divine majesty does not now occur visibly, as it did at that time on the Jordan, since it is sufficient that it occurred once as a witness and a sign.

Therefore we should diligently accustom ourselves to look upon these things with eyes of faith and to interpret this glorious revelation and divine radiance and splendor which shone forth above the baptism of Christ as happening to us; for all this did not happen and all this was not recorded for Christ’s sake, for he himself did not baptize [John 4:2], but rather for our comfort and the strengthening of our faith, for the sake of which he also accepted baptism. Therefore wherever anybody is being baptized according to Christ’s command we should be confidently convinced that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is present there, and that there is pure delight, pleasure, and joy in heaven over the fact that sin is forgiven, the heavens opened forever, and that now there is no more wrath but only grace unalloyed.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Christians, this Lord Jesus  
 Shall return again  
 In His Father's glory,  
 With His angel train;  
 For all wreaths of empire  
 Meet upon His brow,  
 And our hearts confess Him  
 King of glory now.

—At the Name of Jesus (*LSB* 512:6)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty, everlasting God, for our many sins we justly deserve eternal condemnation. In Your mercy, You sent Your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who won for us forgiveness of sins and everlasting salvation. Grant us a true confession so that dead to sin we may hear the sweet words of Absolution from our confessor as Luther heard them from his pastor, Johannes von Staupitz, and be released from all our sin; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1105)

## Johann von Staupitz, Luther's Father Confessor

Johann von Staupitz (ca. 1469–1524), vicar-general of the Augustinian Order in Germany and friend of Martin Luther, was born in Saxony. He studied at the universities in Leipzig and Cologne and served on the faculty at Cologne. In 1503, he was called by Frederick the Wise to serve as dean of the theological faculty at the newly founded University of Wittenberg. There he encouraged Luther to attain a doctorate in theology and appointed Luther as his successor to professor of Bible. During

Luther's early struggles to understand God's grace, it was Staupitz who counseled Luther to focus on Christ and not on himself.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XXIV (XII) 78–88

## 9 NOVEMBER

*Martin Chemnitz (birth),  
 Pastor and Confessor*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises | to our God;\*  
 for it is pleasant, and a song  
 of praise is | fitting.
- <sup>2</sup> The LORD builds up Je- | rusalem;\*  
 he gathers the outcasts of | Israel.
- <sup>3</sup> He heals the broken- | hearted\*  
 and binds | up their wounds.
- <sup>4</sup> He determines the number | of the stars;\*  
 he gives to all of | them their names.
- <sup>5</sup> Great is our Lord, and abun- | dant  
 in power;\*  
 his understanding is beyond | measure.
- <sup>6</sup> The LORD lifts up the | humble;\*  
 he casts the wicked | to the ground.
- <sup>7</sup> Sing to the LORD with thanks- | giving;\*  
 make melody to our God | on the lyre!
- <sup>8</sup> He covers the heavens with clouds; he  
 prepares rain | for the earth;\*  
 he makes grass grow | on the hills.
- <sup>9</sup> He gives to the | beasts their food,\*  
 and to the young ravens | that cry.
- <sup>10</sup> His delight is not in the strength | of  
 the horse,\*

nor his pleasure in the legs | of a man,  
<sup>11</sup>but the LORD takes pleasure  
 in those who | fear him,\*  
 in those who hope in his | steadfast love.  
 —Psalm 147:1–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 147*

### Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 22:1–23

[Message to the House of David]

<sup>1</sup>Thus says the LORD: “Go down to the house of the king of Judah and speak there this word, <sup>2</sup>and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, who sits on the throne of David, you, and your servants, and your people who enter these gates. <sup>3</sup>Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. <sup>4</sup>For if you will indeed obey this word, then there shall enter the gates of this house kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their servants and their people. <sup>5</sup>But if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation. <sup>6</sup>For thus says the LORD concerning the house of the king of Judah:

“ You are like Gilead to me,  
 like the summit of Lebanon,  
 yet surely I will make you a desert,  
 an uninhabited city.  
<sup>7</sup>I will prepare destroyers against you,  
 each with his weapons,  
 and they shall cut down  
 your choicest cedars  
 and cast them into the fire.

<sup>8</sup>“And many nations will pass by this city, and every man will say to his neighbor, “Why has the Lord dealt thus with this great city?” <sup>9</sup>And they will answer, “Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God and worshiped other gods and served them.” ’ ”

<sup>10</sup>Weep not for him who is dead,  
 nor grieve for him,  
 but weep bitterly for him who goes away,  
 for he shall return no more  
 to see his native land.

Message to the Sons of Josiah

<sup>11</sup>For thus says the LORD concerning Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, and who went away from this place: “He shall return here no more, <sup>12</sup>but in the place where they have carried him captive, there shall he die, and he shall never see this land again.”

<sup>13</sup>“Woe to him who builds his house  
 by unrighteousness,  
 and his upper rooms by injustice,  
 who makes his neighbor serve him  
 for nothing  
 and does not give him his wages,  
<sup>14</sup>who says, ‘I will build myself  
 a great house  
 with spacious upper rooms,’  
 who cuts out windows for it,  
 paneling it with cedar  
 and painting it with vermilion.

<sup>15</sup>Do you think you are a king  
 because you compete in cedar?  
 Did not your father eat and drink  
 and do justice and righteousness?  
 Then it was well with him.

<sup>16</sup>He judged the cause of the poor  
 and needy;  
 then it was well.

Is not this to know me?  
declares the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>But you have eyes and heart  
only for your dishonest gain,  
for shedding innocent blood,  
and for practicing oppression  
and violence.”

<sup>18</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD  
concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah,  
king of Judah:

“They shall not lament for him, saying,  
‘Ah, my brother!’ or ‘Ah, sister!’  
They shall not lament for him, saying,  
‘Ah, lord!’ or ‘Ah, his majesty!’  
<sup>19</sup>With the burial of a donkey  
he shall be buried,  
dragged and dumped beyond  
the gates of Jerusalem.”

<sup>20</sup>“Go up to Lebanon, and cry out,  
and lift up your voice in Bashan;  
cry out from Abarim,  
for all your lovers are destroyed.

<sup>21</sup>I spoke to you in your prosperity,  
but you said, ‘I will not listen.’  
This has been your way from your youth,  
that you have not obeyed my voice.

<sup>22</sup>The wind shall shepherd all your  
shepherds,  
and your lovers  
shall go into captivity;  
then you will be ashamed  
and confounded  
because of all your evil.

<sup>23</sup>O inhabitant of Lebanon,  
nested among the cedars,  
how you will be pitied when pangs  
come upon you,  
pain as of a woman in labor!”

## New Testament Reading: Matthew 25:1–13

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

<sup>1</sup>“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup>Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup>For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup>but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup>As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. <sup>6</sup>But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ <sup>7</sup>Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup>And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ <sup>9</sup>But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ <sup>10</sup>And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup>Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ <sup>12</sup>But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ <sup>13</sup>Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

## Writing

[“But deliver us from evil.”] We are taught in the petition to lift up our heads, to think upon, and to desire the blessed life to come. This life is eternal where there will be full deliverance from all evil. Because we are too occupied and immersed in the matters and affairs of this world and of this life, we also request that God would inspire, excite, kindle, generate, and preserve in us this thought and desire. The death of the

godly is their deliverance from all evil and a beginning of everlasting happiness.

Therefore, when we say, “Deliver us from evil,” we desire that our heavenly Father would keep us from an evil death. We ask for His deliverance so that we may not die . . . the death of sinners. . . . We ask that we may not die carelessly in our sins, unprepared without repentance (John 8:24), but that He would grant us a godly and saving end of this life. We ask to die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13). . . .

Furthermore, we pray that God would put into us a concern and desire to prepare ourselves in advance for those things that are necessary to be properly prepared for death. This is done so that we may be prepared for death, because we do not want to be like those who do not have oil in their lamps when the bridegroom comes and calls us (Matt. 25:3). We ask that in the last hour of this life we may have true repentance, the Word, the Sacraments, faith, hope, and the spirit of grace and prayer. These things we ask so that when we are to die, we may be found in Christ. . . . In this we rightly commend our souls into the hands of our Father. If we are found improperly prepared, we pray that He would not allow this to happen by a sudden unannounced death, but would mercifully grant us time for such preparation. We ask that our death may be a deliverance from all evil and a passage out of this vale of misery to eternal life.

—Martin Chemnitz

## Hymnody

“Wake, awake, for night is flying,”  
The watchmen on the heights are crying;  
“Awake, Jerusalem, arise!”

Midnight hears the welcome voices  
And at the thrilling cry rejoices:

“Oh, where are ye, ye virgins wise?

The Bridegroom comes, awake!

Your lamps with gladness take!

Alleluia!

With bridal care

Yourselves prepare

To meet the Bridegroom, who is near.”

—Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying  
(LSB 516:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, through the teaching of Martin Chemnitz, You prepare us for the coming of Your Son to lead home His Bride, the Church, that with all the company of the redeemed we may finally enter into His eternal wedding feast; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1106)

## Martin Chemnitz, Pastor and Confessor

Aside from Martin Luther, Martin Chemnitz (1522–1586) is regarded as the most important theologian in the history of the Lutheran Church. Chemnitz combined a penetrating intellect and an almost encyclopedic knowledge of Scripture and the Church Fathers with a genuine love for the Church. When various doctrinal disagreements broke out after Luther’s death in 1546, Chemnitz determined to give himself fully to the restoration of unity in the Lutheran Church. He became the

leading spirit and principal author of the 1577 Formula of Concord, which settled the doctrinal disputes on the basis of Scripture and largely succeeded in restoring unity among Lutherans. Chemnitz also authored the four volume *Examination of the Council of Trent* (1565–1573), in which he rigorously subjected the teachings of this Roman Catholic Council to the judgment of Scripture and the ancient Church Fathers. The *Examination* became the definitive Lutheran answer to the Council of Trent, as well as a thorough exposition of the faith of the Augsburg Confession. A theologian and a churchman, Chemnitz was truly a gift of God to the Church.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIV (XII) 89–95

## 10 NOVEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>The earth is the LORD's and the full- | ness thereof,\*  
the world and those who | dwell therein,  
<sup>2</sup>for he has founded it up- | on the seas\*  
and established it upon the | rivers.  
<sup>3</sup>Who shall ascend the hill | of the LORD?\*
- And who shall stand in his | holy place?  
<sup>4</sup>He who has clean hands and a | pure heart,\*  
who does not lift up his soul to what is  
false and does not swear de- | ceitfully.  
<sup>5</sup>He will receive blessing | from the LORD\*  
and righteousness from the God  
of his sal- | vation.

<sup>6</sup>Such is the generation of those  
who | seek him,\*  
who seek the face of the God of | Jacob.

<sup>7</sup>Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And be lifted up, O | ancient doors,\*  
that the King of glory | may come in.

<sup>8</sup>Who is this King of | glory?\*

The LORD, strong and mighty,  
the LORD, mighty in | battle!

<sup>9</sup>Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And lift them up, O | ancient doors,\*  
that the King of glory | may come in.

<sup>10</sup>Who is this King of | glory?\*

The LORD of hosts, he is the King  
of | glory!  
—Psalm 24

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 25:12–22*

### Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 23:1–20

The Righteous Branch

<sup>1</sup>“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. <sup>2</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. <sup>4</sup>I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king

and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>6</sup>In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’

<sup>7</sup>“Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when they shall no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ <sup>8</sup>but ‘As the Lord lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ Then they shall dwell in their own land.”

Lying Prophets

<sup>9</sup>Concerning the prophets:

My heart is broken within me;  
all my bones shake;  
I am like a drunken man,  
like a man overcome by wine,  
because of the LORD  
and because of his holy words.

<sup>10</sup>For the land is full of adulterers;  
because of the curse the land mourns,  
and the pastures of the wilderness  
are dried up.

Their course is evil,  
and their might is not right.

<sup>11</sup>“Both prophet and priest are ungodly;  
even in my house I have found their  
evil, declares the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore their way shall be to them  
like slippery paths in the darkness,  
into which they shall be driven  
and fall,

for I will bring disaster upon them  
in the year of their punishment,  
declares the LORD.

<sup>13</sup>In the prophets of Samaria  
I saw an unsavory thing:

they prophesied by Baal  
and led my people Israel astray.

<sup>14</sup>But in the prophets of Jerusalem

I have seen a horrible thing:  
they commit adultery and walk in lies;  
they strengthen the hands  
of evildoers,  
so that no one turns from his evil;  
all of them have become like Sodom  
to me,  
and its inhabitants like Gomorrah.”

<sup>15</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts  
concerning the prophets:

“Behold, I will feed them with bitter food  
and give them poisoned water  
to drink,  
for from the prophets of Jerusalem  
ungodliness has gone out  
into all the land.”

<sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Do not  
listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy  
to you, filling you with vain hopes.  
They speak visions of their own minds, not  
from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>17</sup>They say  
continually to those who despise the word  
of the LORD, ‘It shall be well with you’; and  
to everyone who stubbornly follows his own  
heart, they say, ‘No disaster shall come  
upon you.’”

<sup>18</sup>For who among them has stood in the  
council of the LORD  
to see and to hear his word,  
or who has paid attention  
to his word and listened?

<sup>19</sup>Behold, the storm of the LORD!  
Wrath has gone forth,  
a whirling tempest;  
it will burst upon the head  
of the wicked.

<sup>20</sup>The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his heart.

In the latter days you will understand it clearly.

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 25:14–30

The Parable of the Talents

<sup>14</sup>“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup>So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. <sup>18</sup>But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. <sup>19</sup>Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>22</sup>And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>24</sup>He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not

sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ <sup>26</sup>But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup>So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup>And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ”

### Writing

If one asks what the one characteristic feature of the Christian faith is, distinguishing it from all religions in the world, then we would have to say: It is the forgiveness of sins. The pious Jew and even a pious Mohammedan may hope for God’s pardon. Forgiveness as a real gift, the full assurance of forgiveness, that is the gift of the Gospel.

To proclaim the Gospel of forgiveness, to declare to repentant sinners the forgiveness of their sins, to distribute the Sacraments with all the gifts of divine grace contained in them, this and nothing else, is the proper task of the minister of Christ as it was the *officium proprium* [proper office] of Christ Himself. This the Church had to learn in the great crisis of the second century. . . . The church administration in Europe follows the patterns of the administration of the state, while in America the great business

organizations seem to be unknowingly imitated by the churches. The consequence is that also the parish minister becomes more and more of an administrator and organizer who rushes from meeting to meeting and has not enough time for his proper calling as a shepherd.

—Hermann Sasse

### Hymnody

May we Thy bounties thus  
As stewards true receive  
And gladly, as Thou blessest us,  
To Thee our firstfruits give!

—We Give Thee But Thine Own  
(LSB 781:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Dispel from us the works of darkness and grant us to live in the light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that our faith may never be found wanting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A86)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXIV (XII) 96–99

## 11 NOVEMBER

*Martin of Tours, Pastor*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>Hear my prayer, O LORD;  
give ear to my pleas for | mercy!\*

In your faithfulness answer me,  
in your | righteousness!

<sup>2</sup>Enter not into judgment  
with your | servant,\*  
for no one living is righteous  
be- | fore you.

<sup>3</sup>For the enemy has pursued my soul;  
he has crushed my life | to the ground;\*  
he has made me sit in darkness  
like | those long dead.

<sup>4</sup>Therefore my spirit faints with- | in me;\*  
my heart within me | is appalled.

<sup>5</sup>I remember the days of old; I meditate  
on all that | you have done;\*  
I ponder the work | of your hands.

<sup>6</sup>I stretch out my | hands to you;\*  
my soul thirsts for you like  
a | parched land.

<sup>7</sup>Answer me quickly, O LORD!  
My | spirit fails!\*

Hide not your face from me, lest I be like  
those who go down | to the pit.

<sup>8</sup>Let me hear in the morning of your  
steadfast love, for in | you I trust.\*  
Make me know the way I should go,  
for to you I lift | up my soul.

<sup>9</sup>Deliver me from my enemies, | O LORD!\*

I have fled to you for | refuge!

<sup>10</sup>Teach me to do your will, for you | are  
my God!\*

Let your good Spirit lead me  
on | level ground!

—Psalm 143:1–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 105:1–10*

### Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 23:21–40

[Lying Prophets]

<sup>21</sup>“I did not send the prophets,  
yet they ran;

I did not speak to them,

yet they prophesied.

<sup>22</sup>But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds.

<sup>34</sup>Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? <sup>24</sup>Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. <sup>25</sup>I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' <sup>26</sup>How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, <sup>27</sup>who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? <sup>28</sup>Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. <sup>29</sup>Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? <sup>30</sup>Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who steal my words from one another. <sup>31</sup>Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who use their tongues and declare, 'declares the Lord.' <sup>32</sup>Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the LORD.

<sup>33</sup>"When one of this people, or a prophet or a priest asks you, 'What is the burden of

the LORD?' you shall say to them, 'You are the burden, and I will cast you off, declares the LORD.' <sup>34</sup>And as for the prophet, priest, or one of the people who says, 'The burden of the LORD,' I will punish that man and his household. <sup>35</sup>Thus shall you say, every one to his neighbor and every one to his brother, 'What has the LORD answered?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?' <sup>36</sup>But 'the burden of the LORD' you shall mention no more, for the burden is every man's own word, and you pervert the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God. <sup>37</sup>Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the LORD answered you?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?' <sup>38</sup>But if you say, 'The burden of the LORD,' thus says the LORD, 'Because you have said these words, "The burden of the LORD," when I sent to you, saying, "You shall not say, 'The burden of the LORD,' " <sup>39</sup>therefore, behold, I will surely lift you up and cast you away from my presence, you and the city that I gave to you and your fathers. <sup>40</sup>And I will bring upon you everlasting reproach and perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.' "

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 25:31–46**

The Final Judgment

<sup>31</sup>"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup>Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup>And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup>Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. <sup>35</sup>For I was hungry and you gave me

food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup>Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup>And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup>And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup>And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

<sup>41</sup>“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup>For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ <sup>44</sup>Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ <sup>45</sup>Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ <sup>46</sup>And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

## Writing

Now Scripture sets forth two kinds of teaching—Law and Gospel. The Law, in condemning sins and setting forth the gravest threats of God, is that hammer (Jer 23:29) through which God breaks rocks, that is crushes the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humbles it, so that truly and earnestly acknowledging the multitude and magnitude of sins and of the wrath of God

over sin, the mind begins to hate and detest sin, to fear the wrath and judgment of God so that it is unwilling to perish eternally under them but sighs and struggles with groaning that it may be freed from them. There the Law indeed has and sets forth promises of life, but on condition of perfect fulfillment. . . . The Gospel, however, teaches that what was impossible for the Law on account of the flesh, God provided by sending His Son (Rom. 8:3). Therefore it shows Christ, the Lamb of God, born under the Law for us, in order that He might make satisfaction to the judgment of God, revealed in the Law, by His obedience and suffering on our behalf. This Mediator the Father sets before us in the Gospel as a propitiation by faith in His blood through the remission of sins (Rom. 3:25). “For this is the will of the Father, that everyone who believes in the Son should not perish but have eternal life” (John 6:40). Thus the Gospel proclaims, offers and sets before contrite and terrified consciences the grace of God, reconciliation and remission of sins freely on account of the merit of Christ; and it is His will that everyone should lay hold of and apply this benefit of the Mediator to himself. The ministry of private absolution applies this general promise of the Gospel to the penitent individually, in order that faith may be able to state all the more firmly that the benefits of the passion of Christ are certainly given and applied to it. Moreover, in the use of the Lord’s Supper, Christ offers, applies, and seals, to all who receive it in faith, the New Testament with the precious pledges of His body and blood, namely, that God wants to be gracious with respect to our sins and to remember our iniquities no more.

—Martin Chemnitz

## Hymnody

The day is surely drawing near  
 When Jesus, God's anointed,  
 In all His power shall appear  
 As judge whom God appointed.  
 Then fright shall banish idle mirth,  
 And flames on flames shall ravage earth  
 As Scripture long has warned us.  
 —The Day Is Surely Drawing Near  
 (LSB 508:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God of hosts, Your servant Martin the soldier embodied the spirit of sacrifice. He became a bishop in Your Church to defend the catholic faith. Give us grace to follow in his steps so that when our Lord returns we may be clothed with the baptismal garment of righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1107)

## Martin of Tours, Pastor

Born into a pagan family in what is now Hungary around AD 316, Martin grew up in Lombardy (Italy). Coming to the Christian faith as a young person, he began a career in the Roman army. But sensing a call to a church vocation, Martin left the military and became a monk, affirming that he was "Christ's soldier." Eventually, Martin was named bishop of Tours in western Gaul (France). He is remembered for his simple lifestyle and his determination to share the Gospel throughout rural Gaul. Incidentally, on St. Martin's Day in 1483, the one-day-old son of Hans and Margarete Luther was baptized and given the name "Martin" Luther.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XXVII (XIII) 1–8

## 12 NOVEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> By the waters of Babylon,  
 there we sat | down and wept,\*  
 when we remembered | Zion.
- <sup>2</sup> On the | willows there\*  
 we hung | up our lyres.
- <sup>3</sup> For there our captors required of us songs,  
 and our tormentors, mirth, | saying,\*  
 "Sing us one of the songs of | Zion!"
- <sup>4</sup> How shall we sing the | LORD's song\*  
 in a | foreign land?
- <sup>5</sup> If I forget you, O Je- | rusalem,\*  
 let my right hand for- | get its skill!
- <sup>6</sup> Let my tongue stick to the roof of my  
 mouth, if I do not re- | member you,\*  
 if I do not set Jerusalem  
 above my | highest joy!
- <sup>7</sup> Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites  
 the day of Je- | rusalem,\*  
 how they said, "Lay it bare, lay it bare,  
 down to its foun- | dations!"
- <sup>8</sup> O daughter of Babylon,  
 doomed to | be destroyed,\*  
 blessed shall he be who repays you with  
 what you have | done to us!
- <sup>9</sup> Blessed shall he be who takes  
 your | little ones\*  
 and dashes them a- | gainst the rock!  
 —Psalm 137

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 130*

## Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 25:1–18

### Seventy Years of Captivity

<sup>1</sup>The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), <sup>2</sup>which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: <sup>3</sup>“For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. <sup>4</sup>You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the LORD persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets, <sup>5</sup>saying, ‘Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever. <sup>6</sup>Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.’ <sup>7</sup>Yet you have not listened to me, declares the LORD, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm.

<sup>8</sup>“Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words, <sup>9</sup>behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. <sup>10</sup>Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride,

the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. <sup>11</sup>This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

<sup>12</sup>Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste. <sup>13</sup>I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. <sup>14</sup>For many nations and great kings shall make slaves even of them, and I will recompense them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.”

### The Cup of the LORD’s Wrath

<sup>15</sup>Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: “Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. <sup>16</sup>They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them.”

<sup>17</sup>So I took the cup from the LORD’s hand, and made all the nations to whom the LORD sent me drink it: <sup>18</sup>Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a desolation and a waste, a hissing and a curse, as at this day.

## New Testament Reading: Matthew 26:1–19

### The Plot to Kill Jesus

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, <sup>2</sup>“You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

<sup>3</sup>Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the

high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup>and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. <sup>5</sup>But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

<sup>6</sup>Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, <sup>7</sup>a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. <sup>8</sup>And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? <sup>9</sup>For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” <sup>10</sup>But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. <sup>11</sup>For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. <sup>12</sup>In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. <sup>13</sup>Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

Judas to Betray Jesus

<sup>14</sup>Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup>and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup>And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

The Passover with the Disciples

<sup>17</sup>Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?” <sup>18</sup>He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” <sup>19</sup>And the disciples did as Jesus

had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

## Writing

The prophet also interprets it thus, after his splendid and extensive predictions about this King: He is to rule over all, smashing kings and whatever else is great and resists Him. Lest anyone understand this according to the Jewish delusion that it would happen physically, in the manner of the world, He means to say: “It is certainly true that He is to be great and mighty above all kings on earth. But let me give you the true explanation of how He will deal with this matter and by what manner and form He will achieve such a dominion. He is not going to be a secular lord and king, as I and my descendants in Jerusalem and other kings are. Instead, He will come to earth and share the ordinary life and society of men. He will live His life like an ordinary man, and others will see nothing special or extraordinary about Him.”

In this life, the prophet says, He will “drink from the brook”; that is, He will suffer and die. By “drink” or “cup” Scripture means any sort of torture, misery, and suffering, just as Christ prayed in the garden, where He sweat blood (Luke 22:44) and said (Matt. 26:39): “Dear Father, if it is possible, remove this cup from Me. But if it cannot be otherwise but that I drink it, Thy will be done.” You see, that is the kind of drinking of which this verse speaks. The prophets also speak thus and call it “being drunk” when God punishes. Therefore “to fill the cup” or “to make drunk” means to suffer great torture and pain, and “cup” symbolizes that specific portion of suffering which God awards to Him. Jeremiah 25:15, 16, Psalm

75:8, and many other places express it this way.

Therefore Christ had to drink a “cup” on earth and be “drunk”; that is, He suffered torture and pain and perished before all the world. Furthermore, in His own kingdom He was so miserable and poor that He had no place where He could lay His head (Matt. 8:20). No crown, royal adornment, or pomp could be seen about Him—nothing but cross, nails, and blood. There He hung, unable to touch either heaven or earth and unable to stand up on His feet.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

How weak the effort of my heart,  
How cold my warmest thought!  
But when I see Thee as Thou art,  
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

—How Sweet the Name of Jesus  
Sounds (*LSB* 524:5)

### Prayer of the Day

Eternal God, merciful Father, You have appointed Your Son as judge of the living and the dead. Enable us to wait for the day of His return with our eyes fixed on the kingdom prepared for Your own from the foundation of the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A87)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVII (XIII) 9–10

## 13 NOVEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>12</sup> What shall I render | to the LORD\*  
for all his bene- | fits to me?
- <sup>13</sup> I will lift up the cup of sal- | vation\*  
and call on the name | of the LORD,
- <sup>14</sup> I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
in the presence of all his | people.
- <sup>15</sup> Precious in the sight | of the LORD\*  
is the death | of his saints.
- <sup>16</sup> O LORD, I am your | servant;\*  
I am your servant,  
the son of your maidservant.  
You have | loosed my bonds.
- <sup>17</sup> I will offer to you the sacrifice  
of thanks- | giving\*  
and call on the name | of the LORD.
- <sup>18</sup> I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
in the presence of all his | people,
- <sup>19</sup> in the courts of the house | of the LORD,\*  
in your midst, O Jerusalem. | Praise  
the LORD!

—Psalm 116:12–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 50:7–15*

### Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 26:1–19

Jeremiah Threatened with Death

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD: <sup>2</sup>“Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD’s house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the LORD all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word. <sup>3</sup>It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because

of their evil deeds. <sup>4</sup>You shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law that I have set before you, <sup>5</sup>and to listen to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened, <sup>6</sup>then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.’”

<sup>7</sup>The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. <sup>8</sup>And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, “You shall die! <sup>9</sup>Why have you prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, “This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant’?” And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>When the officials of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king’s house to the house of the LORD and took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the LORD. <sup>11</sup>Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to all the people, “This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears.”

<sup>12</sup>Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and all the people, saying, “The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard. <sup>13</sup>Now therefore mend your ways and your deeds, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will relent of the disaster that he has pronounced against you. <sup>14</sup>But as for me, behold, I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. <sup>15</sup>Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and

upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the LORD sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.”

#### Jeremiah Spared from Death

<sup>16</sup>Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, “This man does not deserve the sentence of death, for he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.” <sup>17</sup>And certain of the elders of the land arose and spoke to all the assembled people, saying, <sup>18</sup>“Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts,

“ ‘Zion shall be plowed as a field;  
Jerusalem shall become  
a heap of ruins,  
and the mountain of the house  
a wooded height.’

<sup>19</sup>Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and entreat the favor of the LORD, and did not the LORD relent of the disaster that he had pronounced against them? But we are about to bring great disaster upon ourselves.”

#### New Testament Reading: Matthew 26:20–35

[The Passover with the Disciples]

<sup>20</sup>When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. <sup>21</sup>And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” <sup>22</sup>And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” <sup>23</sup>He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. <sup>24</sup>The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not

been born.”<sup>25</sup> Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

Institution of the Lord’s Supper

<sup>26</sup>Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”<sup>27</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you,<sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>29</sup> I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Jesus Foretells Peter’s Denial

<sup>30</sup>And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’<sup>32</sup> But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”<sup>33</sup> Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.”<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”<sup>35</sup> Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.

*Additional Reading: Revelation 13:1–18*

**Writing**

Our Lord gives thanks, to teach us how we ought to celebrate this Sacrament, and to show that He does not unwillingly go to the Passion, and to teach us that whatever we may suffer we are to bear it thankfully, thence also suggesting good hopes. For if the

type was a deliverance from such bondage, how much more will the truth set the world free and He will be delivered up for the benefit of our race. Wherefore, I would add, neither did He appoint the Sacrament before this, but only at the point at which the rites of the Law were to cease. Thus the very chief of the feasts, the Passover, He brings to an end. He removes the feasts to another most awful table, and He says, “Take, eat. This is My body, which is broken for many.”

And how were they not confounded at hearing this? Because He had before told unto them many and great things regarding this. Although they needed no more explanation because they had heard enough about it, but He does speak of the cause of His Passion, namely, the taking away of sins. And He calls it blood of a new testament, that of the undertaking, the promise, the new law. For this He is also what He did in the old covenant, and this comprises the testament that is the new law. As the old testament had sheep and bulls, so this has the Lord’s blood. Hence He also shows that He is soon to die, for which reason He also made mention of a testament, and reminds them in it of the former Testament, which was also dedicated with blood. And again He tells the cause of His death, that is, that His blood “is shed for many for the remission of sins”; and He says, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” Do you see how He removes and draws them off from Jewish customs? For as you did that, He says, in remembrance of the miracles in Egypt, so do this likewise in remembrance of Me. The blood of lambs was shed for the preservation of the firstborn, this is shed for the remission of the sins of the whole world.

—John Chrysostom

## Hymnody

Praise the Father, who from heaven  
To His own this food has given,  
Who, to mend what we have done,  
Gave into death His only Son.

—Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior  
(LSB 627:4)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L32)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVII (XIII) 11–17

## 14 NOVEMBER

*Emperor Justinian, Christian Ruler  
and Confessor of Christ*

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>The fool says in his heart,  
“There | is no God.”\*

They are corrupt, doing abominable  
iniquity; there is none | who does good.

<sup>2</sup>God looks down from heaven  
on the chil- | dren of man\*

to see if there are any who understand,  
who seek | after God.

<sup>3</sup>They have all fallen away; together they have  
be- | come corrupt;\*

there is none who does good,  
not | even one.

<sup>4</sup>Have those who work evil no | knowledge,\*  
who eat up my people as they eat bread,  
and do not call up- | on God?

<sup>5</sup>There they are, in great terror,  
where there is no | terror!\*

For God scatters the bones of him who  
encamps against you; you put them  
to shame, for God has re- | jected them.

<sup>6</sup>Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out  
of | Zion!\*

When God restores the fortunes  
of his people, let Jacob rejoice,  
let Israel | be glad.

—Psalm 53

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 55:12–19*

## Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 29:1–19

Jeremiah’s Letter to the Exiles

<sup>1</sup>These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. <sup>2</sup>This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said: <sup>4</sup>“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup>Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. <sup>6</sup>Take wives and have sons

and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. <sup>7</sup>But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. <sup>8</sup>For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, <sup>9</sup>for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>“For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. <sup>11</sup>For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup>Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. <sup>13</sup>You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup>I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

<sup>15</sup>“Because you have said, ‘The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon,’ <sup>16</sup>thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and concerning all the people who dwell in this city, your kinsmen who did not go out with you into exile: <sup>17</sup>“Thus says the Lord of hosts, behold, I am sending on them sword, famine, and pestilence, and I will make them like vile figs that are so rotten they cannot be eaten. <sup>18</sup>I will pursue them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and will make them a horror to

all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, a terror, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, <sup>19</sup>because they did not pay attention to my words, declares the LORD, that I persistently sent to you by my servants the prophets, but you would not listen, declares the LORD.’”

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 26:36–56**

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

<sup>36</sup>Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” <sup>37</sup>And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <sup>38</sup>Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” <sup>39</sup>And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” <sup>40</sup>And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? <sup>41</sup>Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” <sup>42</sup>Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” <sup>43</sup>And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup>So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. <sup>45</sup>Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>46</sup>Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

## Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

<sup>47</sup>While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. <sup>48</sup>Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” <sup>49</sup>And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. <sup>50</sup>Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. <sup>51</sup>And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. <sup>52</sup>Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. <sup>53</sup>Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup>But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” <sup>55</sup>At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. <sup>56</sup>But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.

*Additional Reading: Revelation 14:1–20*

## Writing

The office of Christ is described most clearly, namely, that He will not bear the sword, that He will not found a new state, but will be a teacher to instruct men concerning a certain unheard but eternal decree of God.

Therefore, even if other kings must also make laws and govern through laws, nevertheless their chief function is not to

teach or to pass laws, but to punish evil men with the sword and to defend good men. They are consequently like lictors or hangmen of God. For, as Paul says, “they bear the sword to terrify the wicked and for vengeance” (Rom. 13:4). Their own duty is, therefore, not to teach, because they do not rule over consciences or hearts, but only to restrain the hands. . . .

Christ left these things to the kings of the world; to His own people He says: “It shall not be so among you” (Matt. 20:26). For His kingdom stands in the Word, and His office is to teach. He left the care of swine to the kings of the world, for they have been provided with a staff with which they can drive cattle. But His office is . . . to preach, to tell of God’s decree. This definition of the kingdom of Christ is clear enough and the proper distinction. But few truly comprehend it. That harmful mixture of both kingdoms continually clings to people’s hearts to such an extent that it is difficult even for spiritual-minded men to distinguish this kingdom properly from the kingdom of the world. Nevertheless those who believe in another life after this life see that the services of kings and governors are necessary for them in this life, but that they need Christ the King for another and eternal life.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Rise, my soul, to watch and pray;  
 From your sleep awaken!  
 Be not by the evil day  
 Unawares o'ertaken;  
 For the foe,  
 Well we know,  
 Is a harvest reaping  
 While the saints are sleeping.

—Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray  
 (LSB 663:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, through the governance of Christian leaders such as Emperor Justinian, Your name is freely confessed in our nation and throughout the world. Grant that we may continue to choose trustworthy leaders who serve You faithfully in our generation and make wise decisions that contribute to the general welfare of Your people; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1108)

## Justinian, Christian Ruler and Confessor of Christ

Justinian was emperor of the East from AD 527 to 565, when the Roman Empire was in decline. With his beautiful and capable wife, Theodora, he restored splendor and majesty to the Byzantine court. During his reign, the empire experienced a renaissance, due in large part to his ambition, intelligence, and strong religious convictions. Justinian also attempted to bring unity to a divided Church. He was a champion of orthodox Christianity and sought agreement among the parties in the Christological controversies of the day as they groups disputed the relation between the divine and human

natures in the person of Christ. The Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in AD 533 was held during his reign and addressed this dispute. Justinian died in his eighties without having accomplished his desire to forge an empire that was firmly Christian and orthodox.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XXVII (XIII) 18–23

## 15 NOVEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, | O God,\*  
 and renew a right spirit with- | in me.
- <sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from your | presence,\*  
 and take not your Holy Spirit | from me.
- <sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your sal- | vation,\*  
 and uphold me with a willing | spirit.
- <sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors | your ways,\*  
 and sinners will re- | turn to you.
- <sup>14</sup> Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,  
 O God of my sal- | vation,\*  
 and my tongue will sing aloud  
 of your | righteousness.
- <sup>15</sup> O Lord, open | my lips,\*  
 and my mouth will de- | clare your praise.
- <sup>16</sup> For you will not delight in sacrifice,  
 or I would | give it,\*  
 you will not be pleased  
 with a burnt | offering.
- <sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken | spirit,\*  
 a broken and contrite heart, O God,  
 you will | not despise.
- <sup>18</sup> Do good to Zion in your good | pleasure,\*  
 build up the walls of Je- | rusalem;

<sup>19</sup> then will you delight in right sacrifices,  
 in burnt offerings and whole  
 burnt | offerings;\*  
 then bulls will be offered on your | altar.  
 —Psalm 51:10–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 51*

### Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 30:1–24

Restoration for Israel and Judah

<sup>1</sup>The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup>“Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. <sup>3</sup>For behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the Lord, and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it.”

<sup>4</sup>These are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah:

<sup>5</sup>“Thus says the LORD:

We have heard a cry of panic,  
 of terror, and no peace.

<sup>6</sup>Ask now, and see,  
 can a man bear a child?

Why then do I see every man  
 with his hands on his stomach  
 like a woman in labor?

Why has every face turned pale?

<sup>7</sup>Alas! That day is so great  
 there is none like it;  
 it is a time of distress for Jacob;  
 yet he shall be saved out of it.

<sup>8</sup>“And it shall come to pass in that day, declares the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off your neck, and I will burst your bonds, and foreigners shall no more make a servant of him. <sup>9</sup>But they shall serve

the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

<sup>10</sup>“Then fear not, O Jacob my servant, declares the LORD,  
 nor be dismayed, O Israel;  
 for behold, I will save you from far away,  
 and your offspring from the land  
 of their captivity.  
 Jacob shall return and have quiet  
 and ease,  
 and none shall make him afraid.

<sup>11</sup>For I am with you to save you,  
 declares the LORD;  
 I will make a full end of all the nations  
 among whom I scattered you,  
 but of you I will not make a full end.  
 I will discipline you in just measure,  
 and I will by no means  
 leave you unpunished.

<sup>12</sup>“For thus says the LORD:  
 Your hurt is incurable,  
 and your wound is grievous.

<sup>13</sup>There is none to uphold your cause,  
 no medicine for your wound,  
 no healing for you.

<sup>14</sup>All your lovers have forgotten you;  
 they care nothing for you;  
 for I have dealt you the blow of an enemy,  
 the punishment of a merciless foe,  
 because your guilt is great,  
 because your sins are flagrant.

<sup>15</sup>Why do you cry out over your hurt?  
 Your pain is incurable.  
 Because your guilt is great,  
 because your sins are flagrant,  
 I have done these things to you.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore all who devour you  
 shall be devoured,  
 and all your foes, every one of them,  
 shall go into captivity;

those who plunder you  
 shall be plundered,  
 and all who prey on you  
 I will make a prey.  
<sup>17</sup>For I will restore health to you,  
 and your wounds I will heal,  
 declares the LORD,  
 because they have called you an outcast:  
 ‘It is Zion, for whom no one cares!’

<sup>18</sup>“Thus says the LORD:  
 Behold, I will restore the fortunes  
 of the tents of Jacob  
 and have compassion  
 on his dwellings;  
 the city shall be rebuilt on its mound,  
 and the palace shall stand  
 where it used to be.

<sup>19</sup>Out of them shall come songs  
 of thanksgiving,  
 and the voices of those  
 who celebrate.

I will multiply them, and they  
 shall not be few;  
 I will make them honored,  
 and they shall not be small.

<sup>20</sup>Their children shall be  
 as they were of old,  
 and their congregation shall be  
 established before me,  
 and I will punish all  
 who oppress them.

<sup>21</sup>Their prince shall be one of themselves;  
 their ruler shall come out  
 from their midst;

I will make him draw near,  
 and he shall approach me,  
 for who would dare of himself  
 to approach me?  
 declares the LORD.

<sup>22</sup>And you shall be my people,

and I will be your God.”

<sup>23</sup>Behold the storm of the LORD!  
 Wrath has gone forth,  
 a whirling tempest;  
 it will burst upon the head  
 of the wicked.

<sup>24</sup>The fierce anger of the LORD  
 will not turn back  
 until he has executed  
 and accomplished  
 the intentions of his mind.

In the latter days you  
 will understand this.

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 26:57–75**

Jesus Before Caiaphas and the Council

<sup>57</sup>Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. <sup>58</sup>And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. <sup>59</sup>Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, <sup>60</sup>but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward <sup>61</sup>and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” <sup>62</sup>And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” <sup>63</sup>But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” <sup>64</sup>Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

<sup>65</sup>Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. <sup>66</sup>What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.” <sup>67</sup>Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, <sup>68</sup>saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”

Peter Denies Jesus

<sup>69</sup>Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” <sup>70</sup>But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.” <sup>71</sup>And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” <sup>72</sup>And again he denied it with an oath: “I do not know the man.” <sup>73</sup>After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.” <sup>74</sup>Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately the rooster crowed. <sup>75</sup>And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

*Additional Reading: Revelation 15:1–8*

## Writing

We have attributed these two parts to repentance: contrition and faith. . . . We say that contrition is the true terror of conscience, which feels that God is angry with sin and grieves that it has sinned. This contrition takes place when sins are condemned by God’s Word. . . .

As the second part of repentance we add faith in Christ. The Gospel, in which the forgiveness of sins is freely promised concerning Christ, should be presented to consciences in these terrors. They should believe that, for Christ’s sake, their sins are freely forgiven. This faith cheers, sustains, and enlivens the contrite, according to Romans 5:1, “Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God.” This faith obtains the forgiveness of sins. It justifies before God, as the same passage testifies, “since we have been justified by faith.” This faith shows the distinction between the contrition of Judas and Peter, of Saul and David. The contrition of Judas or Saul (Matthew 27:3–5; 1 Samuel 31:4–6) is useless because faith is not added. Faith grasps the forgiveness of sins, given as a gift for Christ’s sake. So the contrition of David or Peter (2 Samuel 12:13; Matthew 26:75) helps because faith, which takes hold of the forgiveness of sins granted for Christ’s sake, is added to it. . . . This faith grows gradually and throughout the entire life, struggles with sin, in order to overcome sin and death. Love follows faith, as we have said above. So childlike fear can be clearly defined as anxiety that has been connected with faith, that is, where faith comforts and sustains the anxious heart.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession XIIIA (V) 28–29, 35–38

## Hymnody

Thou hast suffered men to bruise Thee,  
That from pain I might be free;  
Falsely did Thy foes accuse Thee:  
Thence I gain security;  
Comfortless Thy soul did languish  
Me to comfort in my anguish.  
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,  
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

—Christ, the Life of All the Living  
(LSB 420:5)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, the temple of Your body was destroyed on the cross and three days later raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of the Father. Visit us now with this same body, that we may not deny that we know You but in faith hear in our ears Your life-giving voice and receive on our lips Your very body and blood to strengthen us in times of temptation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1109)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVII (XIII) 24–27

## 16 NOVEMBER

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> O God, save me, | by your name,\*  
and vindicate me | by your might.

<sup>2</sup> O God, | hear my prayer;\*  
give ear to the words | of my mouth.

<sup>3</sup> For strangers have risen against me;  
ruthless men | seek my life;\*  
they do not set God be- | fore themselves.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, God is my | helper;\*  
the Lord is the upholder | of my life.

<sup>5</sup> He will return the evil to my | enemies;\*  
in your faithfulness put an | end to them.

<sup>6</sup> With a freewill offering I will sacri- | fice  
to you;\*  
I will give thanks to your name, O LORD,  
for | it is good.

<sup>7</sup> For he has delivered me from  
every | trouble,\*  
and my eye has looked in triumph  
on my | enemies.

—Psalm 54

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 139:7–18*

## Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 31:1–17, 23–34

The LORD Will Turn Mourning to Joy

<sup>1</sup>“At that time, declares the LORD,  
I will be the God of all the clans of Israel,  
and they shall be my people.”

<sup>2</sup>Thus says the LORD:

“The people who survived the sword  
found grace in the wilderness;

when Israel sought for rest,

<sup>3</sup>the LORD appeared to him  
from far away.

I have loved you with an everlasting love;  
therefore I have continued  
my faithfulness to you.

<sup>4</sup>Again I will build you,  
and you shall be built,  
O virgin Israel!

Again you shall adorn yourself  
with tambourines  
and shall go forth in the dance  
of the merry-makers.

<sup>5</sup>Again you shall plant vineyards  
 on the mountains of Samaria;  
 the planters shall plant  
 and shall enjoy the fruit.

<sup>6</sup>For there shall be a day  
 when watchmen will call  
 in the hill country of Ephraim:  
 ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion,  
 to the LORD our God.’ ”

<sup>7</sup>For thus says the LORD:  
 “Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
 and raise shouts for the chief  
 of the nations;  
 proclaim, give praise, and say,  
 ‘O LORD, save your people,  
 the remnant of Israel.’ ”

<sup>8</sup>Behold, I will bring them  
 from the north country  
 and gather them from the farthest  
 parts of the earth,  
 among them the blind and the lame,  
 the pregnant woman  
 and she who is in labor, together;  
 a great company,  
 they shall return here.

<sup>9</sup>With weeping they shall come,  
 and with pleas for mercy  
 I will lead them back,  
 I will make them walk by brooks of water,  
 in a straight path in which  
 they shall not stumble,  
 for I am a father to Israel,  
 and Ephraim is my firstborn.

<sup>10</sup>“Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,  
 and declare it in the coastlands  
 far away;  
 say, ‘He who scattered Israel  
 will gather him,  
 and will keep him as a shepherd  
 keeps his flock.’ ”

<sup>11</sup>For the LORD has ransomed Jacob  
 and has redeemed him  
 from hands too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup>They shall come and sing aloud  
 on the height of Zion,  
 and they shall be radiant  
 over the goodness of the LORD,  
 over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
 and over the young of the flock  
 and the herd;  
 their life shall be like a watered garden,  
 and they shall languish no more.

<sup>13</sup>Then shall the young women rejoice  
 in the dance,  
 and the young men and the old  
 shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy;  
 I will comfort them,  
 and give them gladness for sorrow.

<sup>14</sup>I will feast the soul of the priests  
 with abundance,  
 and my people shall be satisfied  
 with my goodness,  
 declares the LORD.”

<sup>15</sup>Thus says the LORD:  
 “A voice is heard in Ramah,  
 lamentation and bitter weeping.  
 Rachel is weeping for her children;  
 she refuses to be comforted  
 for her children,  
 because they are no more.”

<sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD:  
 “Keep your voice from weeping,  
 and your eyes from tears,  
 for there is a reward for your work,  
 declares the LORD,  
 and they shall come back  
 from the land of the enemy.

<sup>17</sup>There is hope for your future,  
 declares the LORD,

and your children shall come back to their own country. . . .

<sup>23</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Once more they shall use these words in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I restore their fortunes:

"The LORD bless you, O habitation of righteousness,  
O holy hill!"

<sup>24</sup>And Judah and all its cities shall dwell there together, and the farmers and those who wander with their flocks. <sup>25</sup>For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish."

<sup>26</sup>At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me.

<sup>27</sup>"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. <sup>28</sup>And it shall come to pass that as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring harm, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, declares the LORD. <sup>29</sup>In those days they shall no longer say:

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

<sup>30</sup>But everyone shall die for his own sin. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

The New Covenant

<sup>31</sup>"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup>not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took

them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 27:1–10

Jesus Delivered to Pilate

<sup>1</sup>When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. <sup>2</sup>And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.

Judas Hangs Himself

<sup>3</sup>Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, <sup>4</sup>saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." <sup>5</sup>And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. <sup>6</sup>But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money." <sup>7</sup>So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. <sup>8</sup>Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood

to this day. <sup>9</sup>Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, <sup>10</sup>and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me.”

*Additional Reading: Revelation 16:1–21*

## Writing

It would, however, be wholly improper to speak of despair (*desperatio*) on the part of Christ. Despair is iniquity and would conflict with the sinlessness of Christ, which is attested by Scripture. Besides, Scripture expressly bears witness that Christ, while forsaken of God, continued to trust in God (Ps. 22:1, 19ff.; Luke 23:46). While He was forsaken of God, He still cried to God as His God, saying, “My God, my God!” Gerhard writes of this: “Other men cannot, without sinning, feel the wrath of God deserved by their sins, because of the utter corruption of their nature; for secretly in their hearts they become impatient, and at times they also murmur against God in words, as the examples of Job and Jeremiah testify. But Christ bears these tortures without any sin, persists in holy obedience to God, and retains filial trust in His heart. For these are by no means the words of one despairing when He exclaims: ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ But they are the words of one giving notice that He is enduring extreme agony of the soul and pains which are truly of hell. And so Christ, by wrestling with the power of the devil, with the horror of death, and with the agonies of the damned, brought back from them a glorious triumph for our salvation.” . . . Furthermore, it must not be

forgotten that while Christ was forsaken of God, the Father’s declaration still was true: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). By the very fact that Christ took upon Himself, in the place of sinful mankind, this extreme punishment of being forsaken of God and so fulfilled His Father’s will, He remained the object of God’s supreme love, even while He was under His wrath, just as He says: “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.” (John 10:17).

—Francis Pieper

## Hymnody

I caused Your grief and sighing  
By evils multiplying  
As countless as the sands.  
I caused the woes unnumbered  
With which Your soul is cumbered,  
Your sorrows raised by wicked hands.

—Upon the Cross Extended  
(LSB 453:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty, everlasting God, through Your only Son, our blessed Lord, You commanded us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, and to pray for those who persecute us. Therefore, we earnestly implore You that by Your gracious working our enemies may be led to true repentance, may have the same love toward us as we have toward them, and may be of one accord and of one mind and heart with us and with Your whole Church; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (110)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVII (XIII) 28–33

### 17 NOVEMBER

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD  
from the | heavens;\*  
praise him | in the heights!
- <sup>2</sup> Praise him, all his | angels;\*  
praise him, | all his hosts!
- <sup>3</sup> Praise him, | sun and moon,\*  
praise him, all you | shining stars!
- <sup>4</sup> Praise him, you highest | heavens,\*  
and you waters above the | heavens!
- <sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name | of the LORD!\*  
For he commanded  
and they were cre- | ated.
- <sup>6</sup> And he established them forever and | ever;\*  
he gave a decree,  
and it shall not | pass away.  
—Psalm 148:1–6

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 148*

#### Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 33:1–22

The LORD Promises Peace

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the guard: <sup>2</sup>“Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it to establish it—the LORD is his name: <sup>3</sup>Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. <sup>4</sup>For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and

the houses of the kings of Judah that were torn down to make a defense against the siege mounds and against the sword: <sup>5</sup>They are coming in to fight against the Chaldeans and to fill them with the dead bodies of men whom I shall strike down in my anger and my wrath, for I have hidden my face from this city because of all their evil. <sup>6</sup>Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security. <sup>7</sup>I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. <sup>8</sup>I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. <sup>9</sup>And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.

<sup>10</sup>“Thus says the LORD: In this place of which you say, ‘It is a waste without man or beast,’ in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man or inhabitant or beast, there shall be heard again <sup>11</sup>the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD:

“ ‘Give thanks to the LORD of hosts,  
for the LORD is good,  
for his steadfast love  
endures forever!’

For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>“Thus says the LORD of hosts: In this place that is waste, without man or beast, and in all of its cities, there shall again be

habitations of shepherds resting their flocks. <sup>13</sup>In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the LORD.

The LORD'S Eternal Covenant with David

<sup>14</sup>"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup>In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup>In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

<sup>17</sup>"For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, <sup>18</sup>and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever."

<sup>19</sup>The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>20</sup>"Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, <sup>21</sup>then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. <sup>22</sup>As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me."

*Additional Reading:*

*Jeremiah 34:1–36:32; 45:1–51:64*

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 27:11–32**

Jesus Before Pilate

<sup>11</sup>Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." <sup>12</sup>But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. <sup>13</sup>Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" <sup>14</sup>But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

The Crowd Chooses Barabbas

<sup>15</sup>Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. <sup>16</sup>And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. <sup>17</sup>So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" <sup>18</sup>For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. <sup>19</sup>Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream." <sup>20</sup>Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. <sup>21</sup>The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." <sup>22</sup>Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" <sup>23</sup>And he said, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

<sup>24</sup>So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” <sup>25</sup>And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” <sup>26</sup>Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Jesus Is Mocked

<sup>27</sup>Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. <sup>28</sup>And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, <sup>29</sup>and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” <sup>30</sup>And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. <sup>31</sup>And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion

<sup>32</sup>As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross.

Writing

The crucifixion, which ended with the triumphant cry, “It is finished” (John 19:30), was the offering of the all-sufficient sacrifice for the atonement of all sinners. The Man on the cross was the Lamb of God, who bears the sins of the world to carry them away from the face of God. The salvation of the whole world once hung by those three nails of the cross on Golgotha. As the fruit from the wood of the forbidden tree from which

the first man once ate brought sin, death, and damnation upon the entire human race, so the fruits of the wood of the cross restored righteousness, life, and blessedness to all people.

On account of this, the cross is both holy and blessed! Once nothing but a dry piece of wood, it was changed, like Aaron’s staff, into a green branch full of heavenly blossoms and fruit. Once an instrument of torment for the punishment of sinners, it now shines in heavenly splendor for all sinners as a sign of grace. Once the wood of the curse, it has now become, after the Promised Blessing for all people offered Himself up on it, a tree of blessing, an altar of sacrifice for the atonement, and a sweet-smelling aroma to God. Today, the cross is still a terror—but only to hell. It shines upon its ruins as a sign of the victory over sin, death, and Satan. With a crushed head, the serpent of temptation lies at the foot of the cross. It is a picture of eternal comfort upon which the dimming eye of the dying longingly looks, the last anchor of his hope and the only light that shines in the darkness of death.

—C. F. W. Walther

Hymnody

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,  
 See Him dying on the tree!  
 ’Tis the Christ, by man rejected;  
 Yes, my soul, ’tis He, ’tis He!  
 ’Tis the long-expected Prophet,  
 David’s Son, yet David’s Lord;  
 Proofs I see sufficient of it:  
 ’Tis the true and faithful Word.

—Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted  
 (LSB 451:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, as the healer of nations, You released many from their bondage to sin, death, and the devil, but when it came time to release You, the crowd chose a murderer instead. Through our co-crucifixion with You in the waters of our Baptism, may we continually be released from our sins as we confess You to be our everlasting King; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1110)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVII (XIII) 34–39

## 18 NOVEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have you  
for- | saken me?\*
- Why are you so far from saving me, from  
the words of my | groaning?
- <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day,  
but you do not | answer,\*  
and by night, but I | find no rest.
- <sup>3</sup> Yet you are | holy,\*  
enthroned on the praises of | Israel.
- <sup>4</sup> In you our fathers | trusted;\*  
they trusted, and you de- | livered them.
- <sup>5</sup> To you they cried and were | rescued;\*  
in you they trusted and were not | put  
to shame.
- Psalm 22:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 22:12–26*

## Old Testament

### Reading: Jeremiah 37:1–21

Jeremiah Warns Zedekiah

<sup>1</sup>Zedekiah the son of Josiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah, reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim. <sup>2</sup>But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land listened to the words of the LORD that he spoke through Jeremiah the prophet.

<sup>3</sup>King Zedekiah sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “Please pray for us to the LORD our God.” <sup>4</sup>Now Jeremiah was still going in and out among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison. <sup>5</sup>The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt. And when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup>King Zedekiah sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “Please pray for us to the LORD our God.” <sup>4</sup>Now Jeremiah was still going in and out among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison. <sup>5</sup>The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt. And when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

<sup>6</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet: <sup>7</sup>“Thus says the LORD, God of Israel: Thus shall you say to the king of Judah who sent you to me to inquire of me, ‘Behold, Pharaoh’s army that came to help you is about to return to Egypt, to its own land. <sup>8</sup>And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city. They shall capture it and burn it with fire. <sup>9</sup>Thus says the LORD, Do not deceive yourselves, saying, “The Chaldeans will surely go away from us,”

for they will not go away. <sup>10</sup>For even if you should defeat the whole army of Chaldeans who are fighting against you, and there remained of them only wounded men, every man in his tent, they would rise up and burn this city with fire.’ ”

#### Jeremiah Imprisoned

<sup>11</sup>Now when the Chaldean army had withdrawn from Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh’s army, <sup>12</sup>Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to receive his portion there among the people. <sup>13</sup>When he was at the Benjamin Gate, a sentry there named Irijah the son of Shelemiah, son of Hananiah, seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “You are deserting to the Chaldeans.” <sup>14</sup>And Jeremiah said, “It is a lie; I am not deserting to the Chaldeans.” But Irijah would not listen to him, and seized Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. <sup>15</sup>And the officials were enraged at Jeremiah, and they beat him and imprisoned him in the house of Jonathan the secretary, for it had been made a prison.

<sup>16</sup>When Jeremiah had come to the dungeon cells and remained there many days, <sup>17</sup>King Zedekiah sent for him and received him. The king questioned him secretly in his house and said, “Is there any word from the LORD?” Jeremiah said, “There is.” Then he said, “You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.” <sup>18</sup>Jeremiah also said to King Zedekiah, “What wrong have I done to you or your servants or this people, that you have put me in prison?

<sup>19</sup>Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, ‘The king of Babylon will not come against you and against this land?’

<sup>20</sup>Now hear, please, O my lord the king; let my humble plea come before you and do not send me back to the house of Jonathan

the secretary, lest I die there.” <sup>21</sup>So King Zedekiah gave orders, and they committed Jeremiah to the court of the guard. And a loaf of bread was given him daily from the bakers’ street, until all the bread of the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

#### New Testament Reading: Matthew 27:33–56

[The Crucifixion]

<sup>33</sup>And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), <sup>34</sup>they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. <sup>35</sup>And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. <sup>36</sup>Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. <sup>37</sup>And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” <sup>38</sup>Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. <sup>39</sup>And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads <sup>40</sup>and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” <sup>41</sup>So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, <sup>42</sup>“He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup>He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ” <sup>44</sup>And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

The Death of Jesus

<sup>45</sup>Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. <sup>46</sup>And about the ninth hour Jesus cried

out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”<sup>47</sup> And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.”<sup>48</sup> And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink.<sup>49</sup> But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.”<sup>50</sup> And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

<sup>51</sup>And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.<sup>52</sup> The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised,<sup>53</sup> and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.<sup>54</sup> When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

<sup>55</sup>There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him,<sup>56</sup> among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

*Additional Reading: Revelation 17:1–18*

## Writing

[Here is the] pure and true doctrine of our churches concerning [predestination and the eternal providence of God]:

I. Christ has died for all people and, as the Lamb of God, has borne the sins of the whole world.

II. God created no one for condemnation, but wants all people to be saved, and to come

to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore He commands all to hear His Son Christ in the Gospel. By the Gospel He promises the power and working of the Holy Spirit for conversion and salvation.

III. Many people are condemned by their own guilt who are either unwilling to hear the Gospel of Christ or later fall from grace. This happens either by error against the foundation of grace or by sins against conscience.

IV. All sinners who repent are received into grace, and no one is excluded, even though his sins were as scarlet. For God’s mercy is much greater than the sins of all the world, and God has compassion on all His works.

—Christian Visitation Articles 1592,  
Article IV

## Hymnody

O wondrous love, whose depth no heart  
hath sounded,  
That brought Thee here, by foes  
and thieves surrounded!

All worldly pleasures, heedless, I was trying  
While Thou wert dying.

—O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast  
Thou Broken (*LSB* 439:7)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, creator of heaven and earth, grant that as the crucified body of Your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with Him the coming of the third day, and rise with Him to newness of life, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L34)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVII (XIII) 40–46

### 19 NOVEMBER

*Elizabeth of Hungary*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> May the LORD answer you  
in the day of | trouble!\*
- May the name of the God  
of Jacob pro- | tect you!
- <sup>2</sup> May he send you help from the sanctu- | ary\*  
and give you support from | Zion!
- <sup>3</sup> May he remember all your | offerings\*  
and regard with favor your  
burnt sacri- | fices!
- <sup>4</sup> May he grant you your | heart's desire\*  
and fulfill | all your plans!
- <sup>5</sup> May we shout for joy over your salvation,  
and in the name of our God set up  
our | banners!\*
- May the LORD fulfill all your  
pe- | titions!
- <sup>6</sup> Now I know that the LORD saves  
his a- | nointed;\*
- he will answer him from his holy heaven  
with the saving might of his | right hand.
- <sup>7</sup> Some trust in chariots and some  
in | horses,\*  
but we trust in the name of the | LORD  
our God.
- <sup>8</sup> They col- | lapse and fall,\*  
but we rise and | stand upright.
- <sup>9</sup> O LORD, | save the king!\*
- May he answer us | when we call.  
—Psalm 20

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 18:25–34*

## Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 38:1–28

Jeremiah Cast into the Cistern

<sup>1</sup>Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchiah heard the words that Jeremiah was saying to all the people, <sup>2</sup>“Thus says the LORD: He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, but he who goes out to the Chaldeans shall live. He shall have his life as a prize of war, and live. <sup>3</sup>Thus says the LORD: This city shall surely be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon and be taken.” <sup>4</sup>Then the officials said to the king, “Let this man be put to death, for he is weakening the hands of the soldiers who are left in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm.” <sup>5</sup>King Zedekiah said, “Behold, he is in your hands, for the king can do nothing against you.” <sup>6</sup>So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king's son, which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah down by ropes. And there was no water in the cistern, but only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.

Jeremiah Rescued from the Cistern

<sup>7</sup>When Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern—the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate—<sup>8</sup>Ebed-melech went from the king's house and said to the king, <sup>9</sup>“My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they did to Jeremiah the prophet by casting him into the cistern, and he will die there of hunger, for there is no bread left in the city.” <sup>10</sup>Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the

Ethiopian, “Take thirty men with you from here, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies.”<sup>11</sup> So Ebed-melech took the men with him and went to the house of the king, to a wardrobe in the storehouse, and took from there old rags and worn-out clothes, which he let down to Jeremiah in the cistern by ropes.<sup>12</sup> Then Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, “Put the rags and clothes between your armpits and the ropes.” Jeremiah did so.<sup>13</sup> Then they drew Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

Jeremiah Warns Zedekiah Again

<sup>14</sup>King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah the prophet and received him at the third entrance of the temple of the Lord. The king said to Jeremiah, “I will ask you a question; hide nothing from me.”<sup>15</sup> Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “If I tell you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you counsel, you will not listen to me.”<sup>16</sup> Then King Zedekiah swore secretly to Jeremiah, “As the LORD lives, who made our souls, I will not put you to death or deliver you into the hand of these men who seek your life.”

<sup>17</sup>Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: If you will surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then your life shall be spared, and this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live.<sup>18</sup> But if you do not surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.”<sup>19</sup> King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Judeans who have deserted to the Chaldeans, lest I be

handed over to them and they deal cruelly with me.”<sup>20</sup> Jeremiah said, “You shall not be given to them. Obey now the voice of the LORD in what I say to you, and it shall be well with you, and your life shall be spared.<sup>21</sup> But if you refuse to surrender, this is the vision which the LORD has shown to me:<sup>22</sup> Behold, all the women left in the house of the king of Judah were being led out to the officials of the king of Babylon and were saying,

“ ‘Your trusted friends have deceived you and prevailed against you; now that your feet are sunk in the mud, they turn away from you.’ ”

<sup>23</sup>All your wives and your sons shall be led out to the Chaldeans, and you yourself shall not escape from their hand, but shall be seized by the king of Babylon, and this city shall be burned with fire.”

<sup>24</sup>Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “Let no one know of these words, and you shall not die.<sup>25</sup> If the officials hear that I have spoken with you and come to you and say to you, ‘Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you; hide nothing from us and we will not put you to death,’<sup>26</sup> then you shall say to them, ‘I made a humble plea to the king that he would not send me back to the house of Jonathan to die there.’ ”

<sup>27</sup>Then all the officials came to Jeremiah and asked him, and he answered them as the king had instructed him. So they stopped speaking with him, for the conversation had not been overheard.<sup>28</sup> And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard until the day that Jerusalem was taken.

*Additional Reading: Jeremiah 39:1–44:30*

**New Testament Reading:**  
**Matthew 27:57–66**

Jesus Is Buried

<sup>57</sup>When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup>He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. <sup>59</sup>And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud <sup>60</sup>and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. <sup>61</sup>Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb

<sup>62</sup>The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate <sup>63</sup>and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ <sup>64</sup>Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.” <sup>65</sup>Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” <sup>66</sup>So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

**Writing**

This is . . . an outstanding praise of hospitality, in order that we may be sure that God Himself is in our home, is being fed at our house, is lying down and resting as often as some pious brother in exile because of the Gospel comes to us and is received hospitably by us. This is called brotherly love or Christian charity; it is greater than

that general kindness which is extended even to strangers and enemies when they are in need of our aid. . . . For the accounts of the friendships of the Gentiles, like those of Theseus and Hercules, of Pylades and Orestes, are nothing in comparison with the brotherhood in the church; its bond is an association with God so close that the Son of God says that whatever is done to the least of His is done to Himself. Therefore their hearts go out without hypocrisy to the needs of their neighbor, and nothing is either so costly or so difficult that a Christian does not undertake it for the sake of the brethren. . . . But if anyone earnestly believed that he is receiving the Lord Himself when he receives a poor brother, there would be no need for such anxious, zealous, and solicitous exhortations to do works of love. Our coffers, storeroom, and compassion would be open at once for the benefit of the brethren. There would be no ill will, and together with godly Abraham we would run to meet the wretched people, invite them into our homes, and seize upon this honor and distinction ahead of others and say: “O Lord Jesus, come to me; enjoy my bread, wine, silver, and gold. How well it has been invested by me when I invest it in You!”

—Martin Luther

**Hymnody**

O darkest woe!  
Ye tears, forth flow!  
Has earth so sad a wonder?  
God the Father’s only Son  
Now is buried yonder.

—O Darkest Woe (*LSB* 448:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Mighty King, whose inheritance is not of this world, inspire in us the humility and benevolent charity of Elizabeth of Hungary. She scorned her bejeweled crown with thoughts of the thorned one her Savior donned for her sake and ours, that we, too, might live a life of sacrifice, pleasing in Your sight and worthy of the name of Your Son, Christ Jesus, who with the Holy Spirit reigns with You forever in the everlasting kingdom. (1111)

## Elizabeth of Hungary

Born in Pressburg, Hungary, in 1207, Elizabeth was the daughter of King Andrew II and his wife, Gertrude. Given as a bride in an arranged political marriage, Elizabeth became the wife of Louis of Thuringia in Germany at age fourteen. She had a spirit of Christian generosity and charity, and the home she established for her husband and three children in the Wartburg Castle at Eisenach was known for its hospitality and family love. Elizabeth often supervised the care of the sick and needy and at one time even gave up her bed to a leper. Widowed at the age of twenty, she made provisions for her children and entered into an austere life as a nun in the Order of Saint Francis. Her self-denial led to failing health and an early death in 1231 at age twenty-four. Remembered for her self-sacrificing ways, Elizabeth is commemorated through the many hospitals named for her around the world.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVII (XIII) 47–56

## 20 NOVEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>19</sup> Open to me the gates of | righteousness,\*  
that I may enter through them  
and give thanks | to the LORD.
- <sup>20</sup> This is the gate | of the LORD;\*  
the righteous shall enter | through it.
- <sup>21</sup> I thank you that you have | answered me\*  
and have become my sal- | vation.
- <sup>22</sup> The stone that the builders re- | jected\*  
has become the | cornerstone.
- <sup>23</sup> This is the LORD's | doing;\*  
it is marvelous | in our eyes.
- <sup>24</sup> This is the day that the | LORD has made;\*  
let us rejoice and be | glad in it.
- <sup>25</sup> Save us, we pray, | O LORD!\*  
O LORD, we pray, give | us success!
- <sup>26</sup> Blessed is he who comes in the name | of  
the LORD!\*  
We bless you from the house | of  
the LORD.
- <sup>27</sup> The LORD is God, and he has made his light  
to shine up- | on us.\*  
Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,  
up to the horns of the | altar!
- <sup>28</sup> You are my God, and I will give | thanks  
to you;\*  
you are my God; I will ex- | tol you.
- <sup>29</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD,  
for | he is good;\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!
- Psalm 118:19–29

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 118:1–2, 15–24*

### Old Testament Reading: Daniel 1:1–21

Daniel Taken to Babylon

<sup>1</sup>In the third year of the reign of  
Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar  
king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and

besieged it. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. <sup>3</sup>Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, <sup>4</sup>youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. <sup>5</sup>The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. <sup>6</sup>Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. <sup>7</sup>And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

#### Daniel's Faithfulness

<sup>8</sup>But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. <sup>9</sup>And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, <sup>10</sup>and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king." <sup>11</sup>Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had

assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, <sup>12</sup>"Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. <sup>13</sup>Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see." <sup>14</sup>So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. <sup>15</sup>At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. <sup>16</sup>So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

<sup>17</sup>As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. <sup>18</sup>At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup>And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. <sup>20</sup>And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. <sup>21</sup>And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

#### New Testament Reading: Matthew 28:1–20

##### The Resurrection

<sup>1</sup>Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone

and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup>And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” <sup>8</sup>So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

#### The Report of the Guard

<sup>11</sup>While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. <sup>12</sup>And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers <sup>13</sup>and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ <sup>14</sup>And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” <sup>15</sup>So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

#### The Great Commission

<sup>16</sup>Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make

disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

#### Writing

“Jesus approached them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.’” This authority was given to one who had just been crucified, buried in a tomb, laid dead and afterwards had arisen. Authority was given to him in both heaven and earth so that he who once reigned in heaven might also reign on earth through the faith of his believers.

“‘Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’” First they teach all nations; then they baptize those they have taught with water, for the body is not able to receive the sacrament of baptism before the soul has received the truth of the faith. They were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit so that the three who are one in divinity might also be one in giving themselves. The name of the Trinity is the name of the one God.

“‘Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.’” What a marvelous sequence this is. He commanded the apostles first to teach all nations and then to baptize them in the sacrament of faith and then, after faith and baptism, to teach them to observe all that he had commanded. Lest we think these commandments of little consequence or few in number, he added, “all that I have commanded you,” so that those who were to believe and be baptized in the Trinity would observe everything they had been taught.

—Jerome

## Hymnody

On Galilee's high mountain  
 Christ gave the great command  
 In words of strength and promise  
 Which all can understand:  
 "All pow'r to Me is given  
 To do what I shall choose;  
 Therefore I send My children,  
 Their witness I will use."

—On Galilee's High Mountain  
 (LSB 835:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, for our redemption You gave  
 Your only-begotten Son to the death of  
 the cross and by His glorious resurrection  
 delivered us from the power of the enemy.  
 Grant that all our sin may be drowned  
 through daily repentance and that day  
 by day we may arise to live before You in  
 righteousness and purity forever; through  
 Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns  
 with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now  
 and forever. (L37)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XXVII (XIII) 57–63

## 21 NOVEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>When Israel went out from | Egypt,\*  
 the house of Jacob from a people of  
 strange | language,  
<sup>2</sup>Judah became his sanctu- | ary,\*  
 Israel his do- | minion.

<sup>3</sup>The sea | looked and fled,\*  
 Jordan | turned back.

<sup>4</sup>The mountains | skipped like rams,\*  
 the | hills like lambs.

<sup>5</sup>What ails you, O sea, | that you flee?\*"  
 O Jordan, that you | turn back?

<sup>6</sup>O mountains, that you | skip like rams?\*"  
 O | hills, like lambs?

<sup>7</sup>Tremble, O earth, at the presence | of  
 the Lord,\*

at the presence of the God of | Jacob,

<sup>8</sup>who turns the rock into a pool of | water,\*  
 the flint into a spring of | water.

—Psalm 114

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 16*

## Old Testament Reading: Daniel 2:1–23

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

<sup>1</sup>In the second year of the reign of  
 Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had  
 dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep  
 left him. <sup>2</sup>Then the king commanded that the  
 magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and  
 the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king  
 his dreams. So they came in and stood before  
 the king. <sup>3</sup>And the king said to them, "I had a  
 dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the  
 dream." <sup>4</sup>Then the Chaldeans said to the king  
 in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your  
 servants the dream, and we will show the  
 interpretation." <sup>5</sup>The king answered and said  
 to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm:  
 if you do not make known to me the dream  
 and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb  
 from limb, and your houses shall be laid in  
 ruins. <sup>6</sup>But if you show the dream and its  
 interpretation, you shall receive from me  
 gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore  
 show me the dream and its interpretation."  
<sup>7</sup>They answered a second time and said, "Let

the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.”<sup>8</sup> The king answered and said, “I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm—<sup>9</sup>if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.”<sup>10</sup> The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “There is not a man on earth who can meet the king’s demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean.”<sup>11</sup> The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

<sup>12</sup>Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.<sup>13</sup> So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.<sup>14</sup> Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon.<sup>15</sup> He declared to Arioch, the king’s captain, “Why is the decree of the king so urgent?” Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel.<sup>16</sup> And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

<sup>17</sup>Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,<sup>18</sup> and told them to seek mercy from the God

of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.<sup>19</sup> Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.<sup>20</sup> Daniel answered and said:

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,

to whom belong wisdom and might.

<sup>21</sup>He changes times and seasons;  
he removes kings and sets up kings;  
he gives wisdom to the wise  
and knowledge to those who have understanding;

<sup>22</sup>he reveals deep and hidden things;  
he knows what is in the darkness,  
and the light dwells with him.

<sup>23</sup>To you, O God of my fathers,  
I give thanks and praise,  
for you have given me wisdom and might,  
and have now made known  
to me what we asked of you,  
for you have made known  
to us the king’s matter.”

### New Testament Reading: Revelation 18:1–24

The Fall of Babylon

<sup>1</sup>After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory.

<sup>2</sup>And he called out with a mighty voice,

“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!

She has become a dwelling place for demons,

a haunt for every unclean spirit,  
a haunt for every unclean bird,  
a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

<sup>3</sup>For all nations have drunk  
the wine of the passion  
of her sexual immorality,  
and the kings of the earth have  
committed immorality with her,  
and the merchants of the earth  
have grown rich from the power  
of her luxurious living.”

<sup>4</sup>Then I heard another voice from heaven  
saying,

“Come out of her, my people,  
lest you take part in her sins,  
lest you share in her plagues;  
<sup>5</sup>for her sins are heaped high as heaven,  
and God has remembered her  
iniquities.

<sup>6</sup>Pay her back as she herself has paid back  
others,  
and repay her double for her deeds;  
mix a double portion for her  
in the cup she mixed.

<sup>7</sup>As she glorified herself  
and lived in luxury,  
so give her a like measure  
of torment and mourning,  
since in her heart she says,

‘I sit as a queen,  
I am no widow,  
and mourning I shall never see.’

<sup>8</sup>For this reason her plagues  
will come in a single day,  
death and mourning and famine,  
and she will be burned up with fire;  
for mighty is the Lord God w  
ho has judged her.”

<sup>9</sup>And the kings of the earth, who  
committed sexual immorality and lived in  
luxury with her, will weep and wail over her  
when they see the smoke of her burning.

<sup>10</sup>They will stand far off, in fear of her  
torment, and say,

“Alas! Alas! You great city,  
you mighty city, Babylon!  
For in a single hour your judgment  
has come.”

<sup>11</sup>And the merchants of the earth weep  
and mourn for her, since no one buys their  
cargo anymore, <sup>12</sup>cargo of gold, silver, jewels,  
pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet  
cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of  
articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly  
wood, bronze, iron and marble, <sup>13</sup>cinnamon,  
spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil,  
fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and  
chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.

<sup>14</sup>“The fruit for which your soul longed  
has gone from you,  
and all your delicacies and your splendors  
are lost to you,  
never to be found again!”

<sup>15</sup>The merchants of these wares, who gained  
wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of  
her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,

<sup>16</sup>“Alas, alas, for the great city  
that was clothed in fine linen,  
in purple and scarlet,  
adorned with gold, with jewels,  
and with pearls!

<sup>17</sup>For in a single hour all this wealth has  
been laid waste.”

And all shipmasters and seafaring men,  
sailors and all whose trade is on the sea,  
stood far off <sup>18</sup>and cried out as they saw the  
smoke of her burning,

“What city was like the great city?”

<sup>19</sup>And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out,

“Alas, alas, for the great city  
where all who had ships at sea  
grew rich by her wealth!

For in a single hour  
she has been laid waste.

<sup>20</sup>Rejoice over her, O heaven,  
and you saints and apostles  
and prophets,  
for God has given judgment  
for you against her!”

<sup>21</sup>Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

“So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence,  
and will be found no more;

<sup>22</sup>and the sound of harpists  
and musicians, of flute players  
and trumpeters,  
will be heard in you no more,  
and a craftsman of any craft  
will be found in you no more,  
and the sound of the mill  
will be heard in you no more,

<sup>23</sup>and the light of a lamp  
will shine in you no more,  
and the voice of bridegroom and bride  
will be heard in you no more,  
for your merchants were the great ones  
of the earth,

and all nations were deceived  
by your sorcery.

<sup>24</sup>And in her was found the blood  
of prophets and of saints,  
and of all who have been slain  
on earth.”

## Writing

God’s Eternal Foreknowledge and Election

1. To begin with, the distinction between God’s foreknowledge and His eternal predestination ought to be kept accurately.

2. God’s foreknowledge is nothing else than this: God knows all things before they happen, as it is written in Daniel 2:28, “But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.”

3. This foreknowledge extends over the godly and the wicked alike. But it is not the cause of evil or of sin. In other words, it is not what causes people to do wrong (which originally arises from the devil and mankind’s wicked, perverse will). Nor does it cause their ruin, for which they themselves are responsible. But foreknowledge only regulates this and fixes a limit on their ruin, ‹how far it should progress and› how long it should last. All this happens to serve His elect for their salvation, even though such ruin is evil in itself.

4. Predestination, or God’s eternal election, covers only the godly, beloved children of God. It is a cause of their salvation, which He also provides. . . .

5. It is not to be investigated in God’s secret counsel. It is to be sought in God’s Word, where it is revealed.

6. God’s Word leads us to Christ, who is the Book of Life, in whom all are written and elected who are to be saved in eternity. For it is written in Ephesians 1:4, “Even as He chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world.”

7. Christ calls all sinners to Himself and promises them rest. He is eager ‹seriously wills› that all people should come to Him

and allow themselves to be helped. He offers them Himself in His Word and wants them to hear it and not to plug their ears or «neglect and» despise the Word. Furthermore, He promises the power and working of the Holy Spirit and divine assistance for perseverance and eternal salvation so that «we may remain steadfast in the faith and gain eternal salvation».

—Epitome of the Formula of Concord  
XI 2–8

### Hymnody

Ev'ry eye shall now behold Him  
Robed in glorious majesty;  
Those who set at naught and sold Him,  
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,  
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply  
wailing,

Shall their true Messiah see.

—Lo! He Comes with Clouds  
Descending (*LSB* 336:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, You call heaven and all the saints and apostles and prophets to rejoice when those who pretend to be the true Church are brought to judgment. Help us to discern between what is true and what is false, always knowing that Your kingdom comes through humility and suffering and that the truth of the Gospel is found in You alone; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1112)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVII (XIII) 64–69

## 22 NOVEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my | whole heart,\*  
in the company of the upright,  
in the congre- | gation.
- <sup>2</sup> Great are the works | of the LORD,\*  
studied by all who de- | light in them.
- <sup>3</sup> Full of splendor and majesty | is his work,\*  
and his righteousness endures for- | ever.
- <sup>4</sup> He has caused his wondrous works to be  
re- | membered;\*  
the LORD is gracious and | merciful.
- <sup>5</sup> He provides food for those who | fear him;\*  
he remembers his covenant for- | ever.
- <sup>6</sup> He has shown his people  
the power | of his works,\*  
in giving them the inheritance  
of the | nations.
- <sup>7</sup> The works of his hands are faith- | ful  
and just;\*  
all his precepts are | trustworthy;
- <sup>8</sup> they are established forever and | ever,\*  
to be performed with faithfulness  
and up- | rightness.
- <sup>9</sup> He sent redemption to his people; he has  
commanded his covenant for- | ever.\*  
Holy and awesome | is his name!
- <sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning  
of wisdom; all those who practice it  
have a good under- | standing.\*  
His praise endures for- | ever!  
—Psalm 111

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 92:1–8*

### Old Testament Reading: Daniel 2:24–49

[God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream]

<sup>24</sup>Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch,  
whom the king had appointed to destroy

the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation.”

<sup>25</sup>Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: “I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.” <sup>26</sup>The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?”

<sup>27</sup>Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, <sup>28</sup>but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: <sup>29</sup>To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. <sup>30</sup>But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

#### Daniel Interprets the Dream

<sup>31</sup>“You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. <sup>32</sup>The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup>its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup>As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and

broke them in pieces. <sup>35</sup>Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

<sup>36</sup>“This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. <sup>37</sup>You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, <sup>38</sup>and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold.

<sup>39</sup>Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. <sup>40</sup>And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.

<sup>41</sup>And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. <sup>42</sup>And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. <sup>43</sup>As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. <sup>44</sup>And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, <sup>45</sup>just as you saw that a

stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

Daniel Is Promoted

<sup>46</sup>Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. <sup>47</sup>The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.” <sup>48</sup>Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. <sup>49</sup>Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king’s court.

### New Testament Reading: Revelation 19:1–21

Rejoicing in Heaven

<sup>1</sup>After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power  
belong to our God,

<sup>2</sup>for his judgments are true and just;  
for he has judged the great prostitute  
who corrupted the earth with her  
immorality,  
and has avenged on her the blood  
of his servants.”

<sup>3</sup>Once more they cried out,

“Hallelujah!

The smoke from her goes up forever  
and ever.”

<sup>4</sup>And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” <sup>5</sup>And from the throne came a voice saying,

“Praise our God,  
all you his servants,  
you who fear him,  
small and great.”

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

<sup>6</sup>Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God  
the Almighty reigns.

<sup>7</sup>Let us rejoice and exult  
and give him the glory,  
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,  
and his Bride has made herself ready;

<sup>8</sup>it was granted her to clothe herself  
with fine linen, bright and pure”—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

<sup>9</sup>And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

<sup>10</sup>Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

## The Rider on a White Horse

<sup>11</sup>Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup>His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. <sup>13</sup>He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. <sup>14</sup>And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. <sup>15</sup>From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. <sup>16</sup>On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

<sup>17</sup>Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, <sup>18</sup>to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." <sup>19</sup>And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. <sup>20</sup>And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. <sup>21</sup>And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

## Writing

The glory of the last day is here anticipated. As the people of a nation go forth with shouts of victory to meet the returning conquerors, so the multitudes of the perfected saints break forth in hymns of triumph at the return of the victorious Lord of hosts. The salvation of the saints was in His hands, and He wrought it by the mighty manifestation of His grace. And so all glory and power belong to our Lord alone throughout all eternity. His judgments, His sentences, are true; they have been rendered in accordance with His promises; and they are just, for the rulers of the kingdom of Antichrist had every opportunity to see the errors of their way and to return to the truth, but they deliberately refused and thus invited the wrath of the Lord. For the countless souls which the [Antichrist's] harlot corrupted with her idolatry, and for the lives of other thousands whose blood she shed, she will have to answer with a sharp reckoning on the last day.

The song of triumph is echoed by the singers and the elders: And for the second time they said, Hallelujah! And her smoke ascends forever and ever. And the twenty-four elders and the four living beings fell down, and they worshiped God that is seated upon the throne, saying, Amen, Hallelujah! The great harlot is cast into the abyss of fire and brimstone, to be burned with fire throughout eternity. . . . And this fact causes both the elders representing the Church of God and the four cherubs that acted as His servants and messengers to fall down before the throne of God in the act of worshipful adoration, and to repeat, in endless refrain, their hymn of praise, Amen, Hallelujah; to

God alone all praise and glory, through all eternity!

—Paul E. Kretzmann

### Hymnody

Zion hears the watchmen singing,  
 And all her heart with joy is springing;  
 She wakes, she rises from her gloom.  
 For her Lord comes down all-glorious,  
 The strong in grace, in truth victorious;  
 Her star is ris'n, her light is come.  
 Now come, Thou Blessèd One,  
 Lord Jesus, God's own Son,  
 Hail! Hosanna!  
 We enter all  
 The wedding hall  
 To eat the Supper at Thy call.

—Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying  
 (LSB 516:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, send forth  
 Your Son, we pray, to lead home His bride,  
 the Church, that with all the company of  
 the redeemed we may finally enter into His  
 eternal wedding feast; through Jesus Christ,  
 our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and  
 the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
 (H87)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XXVIII (XIV) 1–5

## 23 NOVEMBER

*Clement of Rome, Pastor*

### Psalmody

<sup>4</sup>“O LORD, make me know my end  
 and what is the measure | of my days;\*  
 let me know how fleeting | I am!

<sup>5</sup>Behold, you have made my days  
 a few | handbreadths,\*  
 and my lifetime is as nothing  
 be- | fore you.

Surely all mankind stands  
 as a | mere breath!\*

<sup>6</sup> Surely a man goes about as a | shadow!

Surely for nothing they are in | turmoil;\*  
 man heaps up wealth and does not  
 know who will | gather!

<sup>7</sup>“And now, O Lord, for what | do I wait?\*

My hope | is in you.  
<sup>8</sup>Deliver me from all my trans- | gressions.\*  
 Do not make me the scorn | of the fool!

<sup>9</sup>I am mute; I do not open | my mouth,\*  
 for it is you who have | done it.

<sup>10</sup>Remove your | stroke from me,\*  
 I am spent by the hostility | of your hand.

<sup>11</sup>When you discipline a man with rebukes  
 for sin, you consume like a moth what  
 is | dear to him;\*

surely all mankind is a | mere breath!

<sup>12</sup>“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to  
 my cry; hold not your peace | at my tears!\*

For I am a sojourner with you, a guest,  
 like all my | fathers.

—Psalm 39:4–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 38:12–22*

### Old Testament Reading: Daniel 3:1–30

Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image

<sup>1</sup>King Nebuchadnezzar made an image  
 of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and

its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. <sup>2</sup>Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. <sup>3</sup>Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. <sup>4</sup>And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, <sup>5</sup>that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. <sup>6</sup>And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." <sup>7</sup>Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

#### The Fiery Furnace

<sup>8</sup>Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. <sup>9</sup>They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! <sup>10</sup>You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. <sup>11</sup>And whoever does not

fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. <sup>12</sup>There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

<sup>13</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. <sup>14</sup>Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? <sup>15</sup>Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

<sup>16</sup>Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. <sup>17</sup>If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup>But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

<sup>19</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. <sup>20</sup>And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. <sup>21</sup>Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. <sup>22</sup>Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. <sup>23</sup>And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

<sup>24</sup>Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." <sup>25</sup>He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

<sup>26</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. <sup>27</sup>And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. <sup>28</sup>Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. <sup>29</sup>Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks

anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way." <sup>30</sup>Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

### **New Testament Reading: Revelation 20:1–15**

The Thousand Years

<sup>1</sup>Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. <sup>2</sup>And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, <sup>3</sup>and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

<sup>4</sup>Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup>The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup>Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

The Defeat of Satan

<sup>7</sup>And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup>and

will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup>And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, <sup>10</sup>and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

#### Judgment Before the Great White Throne

<sup>11</sup>Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup>And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup>Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup>And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

### Writing

But not to dwell upon ancient examples, let us come to the most recent spiritual heroes. Let us take the noble examples furnished in our own generation. Through envy and jealousy, the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the Church] have been persecuted and put to death. Let us set

before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labors and, when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and [coming] to the extreme limit of the west, he suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience. . . .

It is right and holy, therefore, men and brethren, to obey God rather than to follow those who, through pride and sedition, have become the leaders of a detestable emulation. For we shall incur no slight injury, but rather great danger, if we rashly yield ourselves to the inclinations of men who aim at exciting strife and tumults, so as to draw us away from what is good. Let us be kind one to another after the pattern of the tender mercy and kindness of our Creator. For it is written, "The kind-hearted shall inhabit the land, and the guiltless shall be left upon it, but transgressors shall be destroyed from off the face of it."

—Clement

### Hymnody

The ancient dragon is their foe;  
His envy and his wrath they know.  
It always is his aim and pride  
Thy Christian people to divide.

—Lord God, to Thee We Give All  
Praise (*LSB* 522:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, Your servant Clement of Rome called the Church in Corinth to repentance and faith to unite them in Christian love. Grant that Your Church may be anchored in Your truth by the presence of the Holy Spirit and kept blameless in Your service until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1113)

## Clement of Rome, Pastor

Clement (ca. AD 35–100) is remembered for having established the pattern of apostolic authority that governed the Christian Church during the first and second centuries. He also insisted on keeping Christ at the center of the Church's worship and outreach. In a letter to the Christians at Corinth, he emphasized the centrality of Jesus' death and resurrection: "Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ, realizing how precious it is to His Father, since it was poured out for our salvation and brought the grace of repentance to the whole world" (1 Clement 6:31). Prior to suffering a martyr's death by drowning, Clement displayed a steadfast, Christlike love for God's redeemed people, serving as an inspiration to future generations to continue to build the Church on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, with Christ as the one and only cornerstone.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVIII (XIV) 6–10

## 24 NOVEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>7</sup> All who hate me whisper together  
a- | bout me;\*  
they imagine the | worst for me.
- <sup>8</sup> They say, "A deadly thing is poured | out  
on him;\*"   
he will not rise again  
from | where he lies."
- <sup>9</sup> Even my close friend in whom I | trusted,\*  
who ate my bread,  
has lifted his heel a- | gainst me.
- <sup>10</sup> But you, O LORD, be gra- | cious to me,\*  
and raise me up,  
that I may re- | pay them!
- <sup>11</sup> By this I know that you de- | light in me:.\*  
my enemy will not shout  
in triumph | over me.
- <sup>12</sup> But you have upheld me because  
of my in- | tegrity,\*  
and set me in your presence for- | ever.  
—Psalm 41:7–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 41*

### Old Testament Reading: Daniel 4:1–37

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

<sup>1</sup>King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! <sup>2</sup>It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.

<sup>3</sup>How great are his signs,  
how mighty his wonders!  
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
and his dominion endures from  
generation to generation.

## Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream

<sup>4</sup>I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. <sup>5</sup>I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. <sup>6</sup>So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. <sup>7</sup>Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. <sup>8</sup>At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, <sup>9</sup>“O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. <sup>10</sup>The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. <sup>11</sup>The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. <sup>12</sup>Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

<sup>13</sup>“I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. <sup>14</sup>He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. <sup>15</sup>But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid

the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. <sup>16</sup>Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. <sup>17</sup>The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’ <sup>18</sup>This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

## Daniel Interprets the Second Dream

<sup>19</sup>Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, “Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you.” Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies! <sup>20</sup>The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, <sup>21</sup>whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived—<sup>22</sup>it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. <sup>23</sup>And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its

roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,' <sup>24</sup>this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, <sup>25</sup>that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. <sup>26</sup>And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules. <sup>27</sup>Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity."

Nebuchadnezzar's Humiliation

<sup>28</sup>All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>29</sup>At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, <sup>30</sup>and the king answered and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" <sup>31</sup>While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, <sup>32</sup>and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass

over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." <sup>33</sup>Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

Nebuchadnezzar Restored

<sup>34</sup>At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever,

for his dominion is an everlasting dominion,

and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;

<sup>35</sup>all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,

and he does according to his will among the host of heaven

and among the inhabitants of the earth;

and none can stay his hand

or say to him, "What have you done?"

<sup>36</sup>At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. <sup>37</sup>Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

## New Testament Reading: Revelation 21:1–8

The New Heaven and the New Earth

<sup>1</sup>Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup>He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

<sup>5</sup>And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup>And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. <sup>7</sup>The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup>But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

### Writing

How, then, can water cleanse and renew our souls? Simple everyday water certainly cannot do this. But God has established a merciful institution: that when a sinner is baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so God

Himself desires to be present there and through this, with His Word connected with the water, to wash the baptized’s soul of all his impurities, make him into a temple of the Holy Spirit, and call him His child and raise him up to be an heir of eternal life. A great and inexpressible wonder happens in Holy Baptism—that man born in sin is reborn to be a child of heaven. Baptismal water is, therefore, a saving, gracious, heavenly, divine water, full of the wonder of divine grace and compassion. St. Paul called it a washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit and said elsewhere: “As many of you as are baptized, you have put on Christ.” Yes, and St. Peter said: “Baptismal water saves us.” . . .

Oh, so do not let your Baptism be taken away! It is your greatest treasure! It is a ship that shall never be wrecked, which leads you into a heavenly harbor. It is quite true that the rebirth that happens at Baptism cannot be truly perceived with the senses. But what did Christ say? “Do not wonder at what I have said ‘You must be born anew.’ The wind blows . . .” That is, you see the water well, you hear its sound and you hear the Word that is spoken over the baptized one, but the inner working of grace, going in his soul on account of it, you cannot see.

—C. F. W. Walther

### Hymnody

Christ has wiped away their tears forever;  
They have that for which we still endeavor.  
By them are chanted  
Songs that ne’er to mortal ears were granted.

—Oh, How Blest Are They (*LSB* 679:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, Alpha and Omega, in Your suffering and death You were making all things new, and from that tree You brought Your work of redemption to an end by declaring, “It is finished.” Be our beginning and our end, that our weeping now at Your table here below may prepare us to feast at Your heavenly banquet, where You will wipe every tear from our eyes and death will be no more; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1114)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVIII (XIV) 11–14

## 25 NOVEMBER

## Psalmody

<sup>9</sup> We have thought on your steadfast love, | O God,\*  
in the midst of your | temple.

<sup>10</sup> As your name, O God, so your praise reaches to the ends | of the earth.\*  
Your right hand is filled with | righteousness.

<sup>11</sup> Let Mount Zion | be glad!\*  
Let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of your | judgments!

<sup>12</sup> Walk about Zion, go around her, number her | towers,\*  
<sup>13</sup> consider well her ramparts, go through her | citadels,  
that you may tell the next generation <sup>14</sup> that this is God, our God forever and | ever.\*  
He will guide us for- | ever.

—Psalm 48:9–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 48*

## Old Testament Reading: Daniel 5:1–30

The Handwriting on the Wall

<sup>1</sup>King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand.

<sup>2</sup>Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. <sup>3</sup>Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. <sup>4</sup>They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

<sup>5</sup>Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. <sup>6</sup>Then the king’s color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. <sup>7</sup>The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king declared to the wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” <sup>8</sup>Then all the king’s wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. <sup>9</sup>Then King Belshazzar was

greatly alarmed, and his color changed, and his lords were perplexed.

<sup>10</sup>The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall, and the queen declared, “O king, live forever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. <sup>11</sup>There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, <sup>12</sup>because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.”

#### Daniel Interprets the Handwriting

<sup>13</sup>Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, “You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. <sup>14</sup>I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. <sup>15</sup>Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. <sup>16</sup>But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

<sup>17</sup>Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. <sup>18</sup>O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. <sup>19</sup>And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled. <sup>20</sup>But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. <sup>21</sup>He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. <sup>22</sup>And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, <sup>23</sup>but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.

<sup>24</sup>“Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed.

<sup>25</sup>And this is the writing that was inscribed: Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. <sup>26</sup>This is the interpretation of the matter: Mene, God has

numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; <sup>27</sup>Tekel, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; <sup>28</sup>Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

<sup>29</sup>Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

<sup>30</sup>That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed.

*Additional Reading: Daniel 7:1–8:27*

### **New Testament Reading: Revelation 21:9–27**

The New Jerusalem

<sup>9</sup>Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” <sup>10</sup>And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup>having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup>It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—<sup>13</sup>on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. <sup>14</sup>And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup>And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. <sup>16</sup>The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width.

And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. <sup>17</sup>He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel’s measurement. <sup>18</sup>The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. <sup>19</sup>The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup>the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup>And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

<sup>22</sup>And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup>And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup>By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup>and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup>They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup>But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

### **Writing**

The following issue also belongs to the further explanation and saving use of the teaching about God’s foreknowledge to salvation: Only the elect, whose names are written in the book of life [Revelation 21:27], are saved. Therefore, how can we know, or why and how can we perceive who the elect

are and who can and should receive this teaching for comfort?

In this matter we should not judge according to our reason, or according to the Law or from any outward appearance. Neither should we attempt to investigate the secret, concealed depth of divine predestination. Instead, we should listen to God's revealed will. For He has made "known to us the mystery of His will" (Ephesians 1:9) and made it clear through Christ so that it might be preached (2 Timothy 1:9).

This is revealed to us in the way Paul says "those whom He predestined [elected and foreordained] He also called" (Romans 8:30). God does not call without means, but through the Word. For He has commanded "that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name" [Luke 24:47]. St. Paul also testifies in a similar way when he writes, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20). The King calls the guests that He wants to have at His Son's wedding through the ministers He sends out (Matthew 22:2-14). . . .

If we want to think about our eternal election to salvation helpfully, we must in every way hold strongly and firmly to this truth: just as the preaching of repentance is universal, so also the promise of the Gospel is universal, that is, it belongs to all people. For this reason Christ has given these commands:

Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations. (Luke 24:47)

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son. (John 3:16)

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 25–28

### Hymnody

Within those walls of Zion  
Sounds forth the joyful song,  
As saints join with the angels  
And all the martyr throng.  
The Prince is ever with them;  
The daylight is serene;  
The city of the blessed  
Shines bright with glorious sheen.

—Jerusalem the Golden (*LSB* 672:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Merciful God, You have promised to those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life that they will dwell in the New Jerusalem, where the temple is the Lamb whose lamp lights the world. Prepare us to enter this heavenly city at the Supper You prepared for us here of the very body and blood of the Lamb, even as we participate now in the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1115)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXVIII (XIV) 15–19

## 26 NOVEMBER

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your | name is near.\*

We recount your | wondrous deeds.

<sup>2</sup>“At the set time that | I appoint\*  
I will judge with | equity.

<sup>3</sup>When the earth totters,  
and all its in- | habitants,\*  
it is I who keep steady its | pillars.

<sup>4</sup>I say to the boastful, | ‘Do not boast,’\*  
and to the wicked, ‘Do not lift | up your  
horn;

<sup>5</sup>do not lift up your | horn on high,\*  
or speak with | haughty neck.’”

<sup>6</sup>For not from the east or | from the west\*  
and not from the wilderness  
comes | lifting up,

<sup>7</sup>but it is God who executes | judgment,\*  
putting down one and lifting up  
an- | other.

<sup>8</sup>For in the hand of the LORD there  
is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed,  
and he pours | out from it,\*  
and all the wicked of the earth | shall  
drain it down | to the dregs.

<sup>9</sup>But I will declare it for- | ever;\*  
I will sing praises to the God of | Jacob.

<sup>10</sup>All the horns of the wicked I will | cut off,\*  
but the horns of the righteous shall  
be | lifted up.

—Psalm 75

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 108*

## Old Testament Reading: Daniel 6:1–28

Daniel and the Lions’ Den

<sup>1</sup>It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; <sup>2</sup>and over them three

presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. <sup>3</sup>Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. <sup>4</sup>Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. <sup>5</sup>Then these men said, “We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”

<sup>6</sup>Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! <sup>7</sup>All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. <sup>8</sup>Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” <sup>9</sup>Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

<sup>10</sup>When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. <sup>11</sup>Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. <sup>12</sup>Then they came near and said before the king, concerning

the injunction, “O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered and said, “The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.”<sup>13</sup> Then they answered and said before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”

<sup>14</sup>Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. <sup>15</sup>Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.”

<sup>16</sup>Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” <sup>17</sup>And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. <sup>18</sup>Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

<sup>19</sup>Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. <sup>20</sup>As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” <sup>21</sup>Then Daniel said to the

king, “O king, live forever! <sup>22</sup>My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” <sup>23</sup>Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. <sup>24</sup>And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

<sup>25</sup>Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. <sup>26</sup>I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,

for he is the living God,  
enduring forever;  
his kingdom shall never be destroyed,  
and his dominion shall be to the end.

<sup>27</sup>He delivers and rescues;  
he works signs and wonders  
in heaven and on earth,  
he who has saved Daniel  
from the power of the lions.”

<sup>28</sup>So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

*Additional Reading: Daniel 9:1–27*

## New Testament Reading: Revelation 22:1–21

### The River of Life

<sup>1</sup>Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup>through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup>No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

### Jesus Is Coming

<sup>6</sup>And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

<sup>7</sup>“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

<sup>8</sup>I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, <sup>9</sup>but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

<sup>10</sup>And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. <sup>11</sup>Let the evildoer still do evil,

and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

<sup>12</sup>“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. <sup>13</sup>I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

<sup>14</sup>Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. <sup>15</sup>Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

<sup>16</sup>“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

<sup>17</sup>The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

<sup>18</sup>I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, <sup>19</sup>and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

<sup>20</sup>He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

<sup>21</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

## Writing

This article, “I believe in the holy Christian Church,” is as much an article of faith as the rest. This is why natural reason

cannot recognize it, even if it puts on all its glasses. The devil can cover it over with offenses and divisions, so that you have to take offense at it. God too can conceal it behind faults and shortcomings of all kinds, so that you necessarily become a fool and pass false judgment on it. Christendom will not be known by sight, but by faith. And faith has to do with things not seen, Hebrews 11[:1]. Christendom joins with her Lord in the song, “Blessed is he who takes no offense at me” [Matt. 11:6]. A Christian is even hidden from himself; he does not see his holiness and virtue, but sees in himself nothing but unholiness and vice. And you, stupid know-it-all, would behold Christendom with your blind reason and unclean eyes!

In a word, our holiness is in heaven, where Christ is; and not in the world, before men’s eyes, like goods in the market place. Therefore let there be offenses, divisions, heresies, and faults; let them do what they can! If only the word of the gospel remains pure among us, and we love and cherish it, we shall not doubt that Christ is with us, even when things are at their worst. As we see here in this book, that through and beyond all plagues, beasts, and evil angels Christ is nonetheless with his saints, and wins the final victory.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Now from that tree of Jesus’ shame  
Flows life eternal in His name;  
For all who trust and will believe,  
Salvation’s living fruit receive.  
And of this fruit so pure and sweet  
The Lord invites the world to eat,  
To find within this cross of wood  
The tree of life with ev’ry good.

—The Tree of Life (*LSB* 561:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, Alpha and Omega, bright Morning Star, You are the tree of life standing on each side of the river of the water of life, bringing healing to the nations. Prepare us for Your coming through the healing medicine of Your Word and Sacraments, putting to flight the diseases of our souls, that with willing hearts we may ever love and serve You; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1116)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
XXVIII (XIV) 20–27



# THE TIME OF CHRISTMAS

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## ADVENT SEASON

*Propers for the Advent Season for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.*

### 27 NOVEMBER

#### Psalmody

<sup>16</sup>Come and hear, all you who | fear God,\*  
and I will tell what he has done | for  
my soul.

<sup>17</sup>I cried to him | with my mouth,\*  
and high praise was | on my tongue.

<sup>18</sup>If I had cherished iniquity | in my heart,\*  
the Lord would not have | listened.

<sup>19</sup>But truly God has | listened;\*  
he has attended to the voice | of  
my prayer.

—Psalm 66:16–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 66*

#### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 1:1–28

<sup>1</sup>The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz,  
which he saw concerning Judah and  
Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham,  
Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

The Wickedness of Judah

<sup>2</sup>Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth;  
for the Lord has spoken:

“Children have I reared and brought up,  
but they have rebelled against me.

<sup>3</sup>The ox knows its owner,  
and the donkey its master’s crib,

but Israel does not know,  
my people do not understand.”

<sup>4</sup>Ah, sinful nation,  
a people laden with iniquity,  
offspring of evildoers,  
children who deal corruptly!  
They have forsaken the Lord,  
they have despised the Holy One  
of Israel,  
they are utterly estranged.

<sup>5</sup>Why will you still be struck down?  
Why will you continue to rebel?  
The whole head is sick,  
and the whole heart faint.

<sup>6</sup>From the sole of the foot even to the  
head,

there is no soundness in it,  
but bruises and sores  
and raw wounds;  
they are not pressed out or bound up  
or softened with oil.

<sup>7</sup>Your country lies desolate;  
your cities are burned with fire;  
in your very presence  
foreigners devour your land;  
it is desolate, as overthrown by  
foreigners.

<sup>8</sup>And the daughter of Zion is left  
like a booth in a vineyard,

like a lodge in a cucumber field,  
like a besieged city.

<sup>9</sup>If the LORD of hosts  
had not left us a few survivors,  
we should have been like Sodom,  
and become like Gomorrah.

<sup>10</sup>Hear the word of the Lord,  
you rulers of Sodom!  
Give ear to the teaching of our God,  
you people of Gomorrah!

<sup>11</sup>“What to me is the multitude of your  
sacrifices?

says the LORD;

I have had enough of burnt offerings  
of rams

and the fat of well-fed beasts;

I do not delight in the blood of bulls,  
or of lambs, or of goats.

<sup>12</sup>“When you come to appear before me,  
who has required of you  
this trampling of my courts?

<sup>13</sup>Bring no more vain offerings;  
incense is an abomination to me.

New moon and Sabbath and the calling of  
convocations—

I cannot endure iniquity and solemn  
assembly.

<sup>14</sup>Your new moons and your appointed  
feasts

my soul hates;

they have become a burden to me;

I am weary of bearing them.

<sup>15</sup>When you spread out your hands,  
I will hide my eyes from you;  
even though you make many prayers,

I will not listen;

your hands are full of blood.

<sup>16</sup>Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;  
remove the evil of your deeds from  
before my eyes;

cease to do evil,

<sup>17</sup>learn to do good;

seek justice,

correct oppression;

bring justice to the fatherless,

plead the widow’s cause.

<sup>18</sup>“Come now, let us reason together, says  
the LORD:

though your sins are like scarlet,

they shall be as white as snow;

though they are red like crimson,

they shall become like wool.

<sup>19</sup>If you are willing and obedient,

you shall eat the good of the land;

<sup>20</sup>but if you refuse and rebel,

you shall be eaten by the sword;

for the mouth of the Lord

has spoken.”

#### The Unfaithful City

<sup>21</sup>How the faithful city

has become a whore,

she who was full of justice!

Righteousness lodged in her,

but now murderers.

<sup>22</sup>Your silver has become dross,

your best wine mixed with water.

<sup>23</sup>Your princes are rebels

and companions of thieves.

Everyone loves a bribe

and runs after gifts.

They do not bring justice to the fatherless,

and the widow’s cause does not

come to them.

<sup>24</sup>Therefore the LORD declares,

the LORD of hosts,

the Mighty One of Israel:

“Ah, I will get relief from my enemies

and avenge myself on my foes.

<sup>25</sup>I will turn my hand against you  
and will smelt away your dross as  
with lye  
and remove all your alloy.

<sup>26</sup>And I will restore your judges as at the  
first,  
and your counselors as at the  
beginning.

Afterward you shall be called the city of  
righteousness,  
the faithful city.”

<sup>27</sup>Zion shall be redeemed by justice,  
and those in her who repent,  
by righteousness.

<sup>28</sup>But rebels and sinners shall be broken  
together,  
and those who forsake the Lord shall  
be consumed.

### New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 1:1–12

#### Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup>according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

#### Born Again to a Living Hope

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup>In this you rejoice, though now for a little

while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup>obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

<sup>10</sup>Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, <sup>11</sup>inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

#### Writing

[It finally came in time] to the most perfect promise of all, that of the new testament, in which, with plain words, life and salvation are freely promised, and actually granted to those who believe the promise. And he distinguishes this testament from the old one by a particular mark when he calls it the “new testament” [Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25]. For the old testament given through Moses was not a promise of forgiveness of sins or of eternal things, but of temporal things, namely, of the land of Canaan, by which no man was renewed in spirit to lay hold on the heavenly inheritance. Wherefore also it was

necessary that, as a figure of Christ, a dumb beast should be slain, in whose blood the same testament might be confirmed, as the blood corresponded to the testament and the sacrifice corresponded to the promise. But here Christ says “the new testament in my blood” [Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25], not somebody else’s, but his own, by which grace is promised through the Spirit for the forgiveness of sins, that we may obtain the inheritance.

According to its substance, therefore, the mass is nothing but the aforesaid words of Christ: “Take and eat, etc.” [Matt. 26:26], as if he were saying: “Behold, O sinful and condemned man, out of the pure and unmerited love with which I love you, and by the will of the Father of mercies [II Cor. 1:3], apart from any merit or desire of yours, I promise you in these words the forgiveness of all your sins and life everlasting. And that you may be absolutely certain of this irrevocable promise of mine, I shall give my body and pour out my blood, confirming this promise by my very death, and leaving you my body and blood as a sign and memorial of this same promise. As often as you partake of them, remember me, proclaim and praise my love and bounty toward you, and give thanks.”

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Since He is ours,  
We fear no powers,  
Not of earth nor sin nor death.  
He sees and blesses  
In worst distresses;  
He can change them with a breath.  
Wherefore the story  
Tell of His glory

With hearts and voices;  
All heav’n rejoices  
In Him forever: Alleluia!  
We shout for gladness,  
Triumph o’er sadness,  
Love Him and praise Him  
And still shall raise Him  
Glad hymns forever: Alleluia!  
—In Thee Is Gladness (*LSB* 818:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L01)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism Longer Preface 1–6

## 28 NOVEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>13</sup> You will arise and have pity on | Zion;\*  
it is the time to favor her; the appointed |  
time has come.
- <sup>14</sup> For your servants hold her | stones dear\*  
and have pity | on her dust.
- <sup>15</sup> Nations will fear the name | of the LORD,\*  
and all the kings of the earth will fear  
your | glory.
- <sup>16</sup> For the LORD builds up | Zion;\*  
he appears in his | glory;
- <sup>17</sup> he regards the prayer of the | destitute\*  
and does not de- | spise their prayer.  
—Psalm 102:13–17

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 85*

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 2:1–22

The Mountain of the LORD

<sup>1</sup>The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house  
of the LORD  
shall be established as the highest  
of the mountains,  
and shall be lifted up above the hills;  
and all the nations shall flow to it,  
<sup>3</sup>and many peoples shall come,  
and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain  
of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”  
For out of Zion shall go the law,  
and the word of the LORD  
from Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup>He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall decide disputes  
for many peoples;  
and they shall beat their swords  
into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword  
against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore.

<sup>5</sup>O house of Jacob,  
come, let us walk  
in the light of the Lord.

The Day of the LORD

<sup>6</sup>For you have rejected your people,  
the house of Jacob,  
because they are full of things  
from the east

and of fortune-tellers like the  
Philistines,  
and they strike hands with the  
children of foreigners.

<sup>7</sup>Their land is filled with silver and gold,  
and there is no end to their treasures;  
their land is filled with horses,  
and there is no end to their chariots.

<sup>8</sup>Their land is filled with idols;  
they bow down to the work  
of their hands,  
to what their own fingers have made.

<sup>9</sup>So man is humbled,  
and each one is brought low—  
do not forgive them!

<sup>10</sup>Enter into the rock  
and hide in the dust  
from before the terror of the LORD,  
and from the splendor of his majesty.

<sup>11</sup>The haughty looks of man shall be  
brought low,  
and the lofty pride of men shall be  
humbled,  
and the LORD alone will be exalted  
in that day.

<sup>12</sup>For the LORD of hosts has a day  
against all that is proud and lofty,  
against all that is lifted up—and it  
shall be brought low;

<sup>13</sup>against all the cedars of Lebanon,  
lofty and lifted up;  
and against all the oaks of Bashan;

<sup>14</sup>against all the lofty mountains,  
and against all the uplifted hills;

<sup>15</sup>against every high tower,  
and against every fortified wall;

<sup>16</sup>against all the ships of Tarshish,  
and against all the beautiful craft.

<sup>17</sup>And the haughtiness of man  
shall be humbled,

and the lofty pride of men  
shall be brought low,  
and the LORD alone will be exalted  
in that day.

<sup>18</sup>And the idols shall utterly pass away.

<sup>19</sup>And people shall enter the caves  
of the rocks

and the holes of the ground,  
from before the terror of the LORD,  
and from the splendor of his majesty,  
when he rises to terrify the earth.

<sup>20</sup>In that day mankind will cast away  
their idols of silver and their idols  
of gold,

which they made for themselves  
to worship,

to the moles and to the bats,

<sup>21</sup>to enter the caverns of the rocks  
and the clefts of the cliffs,

from before the terror of the LORD,  
and from the splendor of his majesty,  
when he rises to terrify the earth.

<sup>22</sup>Stop regarding man  
in whose nostrils is breath,  
for of what account is he?

*Additional Reading: Isaiah 3:1–4:6*

### **New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 1:13–25**

Called to Be Holy

<sup>13</sup>Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, <sup>15</sup>but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup>since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” <sup>17</sup>And if you call on him as Father who judges

impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, <sup>18</sup>knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. <sup>20</sup>He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup>who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

<sup>22</sup>Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, <sup>23</sup>since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; <sup>24</sup>for

“All flesh is like grass  
and all its glory like the flower  
of grass.

The grass withers,

and the flower falls,

<sup>25</sup>but the word of the Lord  
remains forever.”

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

### **Writing**

Dr. Luther writes in the Preface to St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans:

Faith, however, is a divine work in us that changes us and makes us to be born anew of God, John 1[:12–13]. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different men, in heart and spirit and mind and powers; it brings with it the Holy Spirit. O, it is

a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them, and is constantly doing them. Whoever does not do such works, however, is an unbeliever. He gropes and looks around for faith and good works, but knows neither what faith is nor what good works are. Yet he talks and talks, with many words, about faith and good works.

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times. This knowledge of and confidence in God's grace makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all creatures. And this is the work that the Holy Spirit performs in faith. Because of it, without compulsion, a person is ready and glad to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, out of love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace. Thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate heat and light from fire. [LW 35:370-71]

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord IV 10-12

### Hymnody

Lord, Thee I love with all my heart;  
I pray Thee, ne'er from me depart,  
With tender mercy cheer me.  
Earth has no pleasure I would share.

Yea, heav'n itself were void and bare  
If Thou, Lord, wert not near me.  
And should my heart for sorrow break,  
My trust in Thee can nothing shake.  
Thou art the portion I have sought;  
Thy precious blood my soul has bought.  
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my  
God and Lord,  
Forsake me not! I trust Thy Word.  
—Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart  
(LSB 708:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L02)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism Longer Preface 7-13

## 29 NOVEMBER

*Noah*

### Psalmody

<sup>19</sup> Open to me the gates of | righteousness,\*  
that I may enter through them and give  
thanks | to the LORD.

<sup>20</sup> This is the gate | of the LORD;\*  
the righteous shall enter | through it.

<sup>21</sup> I thank you that you have | answered me\*  
and have become my sal- | vation.

<sup>22</sup> The stone that the builders re- | jected\*  
has become the | cornerstone.

- <sup>23</sup>This is the LORD's | doing;\*  
it is marvelous | in our eyes.  
<sup>24</sup>This is the day that the | LORD has made;\*  
let us rejoice and be | glad in it.  
—Psalm 118:19–24

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 118*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 5:1–25

The Vineyard of the LORD Destroyed

- <sup>1</sup>Let me sing for my beloved  
my love song concerning his vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.  
<sup>2</sup>He dug it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
and he looked for it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes.  
<sup>3</sup>And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem  
and men of Judah,  
judge between me and my vineyard.  
<sup>4</sup>What more was there to do for my vineyard,  
that I have not done in it?  
When I looked for it to yield grapes,  
why did it yield wild grapes?  
<sup>5</sup>And now I will tell you  
what I will do to my vineyard.  
I will remove its hedge,  
and it shall be devoured;  
I will break down its wall,  
and it shall be trampled down.  
<sup>6</sup>I will make it a waste;  
it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and briars and thorns shall grow up;  
I will also command the clouds  
that they rain no rain upon it.  
<sup>7</sup>For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts  
is the house of Israel,

and the men of Judah  
are his pleasant planting;  
and he looked for justice,  
but behold, bloodshed;  
for righteousness,  
but behold, an outcry!

Woe to the Wicked

- <sup>8</sup>Woe to those who join house to house,  
who add field to field,  
until there is no more room,  
and you are made to dwell alone  
in the midst of the land.  
<sup>9</sup>The LORD of hosts has sworn in my hearing:  
“Surely many houses shall be desolate,  
large and beautiful houses,  
without inhabitant.  
<sup>10</sup>For ten acres of vineyard shall yield  
but one bath,  
and a homer of seed shall yield  
but an ephah.”  
<sup>11</sup>Woe to those who rise early in the morning,  
that they may run after strong drink,  
who tarry late into the evening  
as wine inflames them!  
<sup>12</sup>They have lyre and harp,  
tambourine and flute and wine  
at their feasts,  
but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD,  
or see the work of his hands.  
<sup>13</sup>Therefore my people go into exile  
for lack of knowledge;  
their honored men go hungry,  
and their multitude is parched with  
thirst.  
<sup>14</sup>Therefore Sheol has enlarged its appetite  
and opened its mouth beyond measure,  
and the nobility of Jerusalem and her  
multitude will go down,  
her revelers and he who exults in her.

<sup>15</sup>Man is humbled, and each one  
is brought low,  
and the eyes of the haughty  
are brought low.

<sup>16</sup>But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice,  
and the Holy God shows himself holy  
in righteousness.

<sup>17</sup>Then shall the lambs graze  
as in their pasture,  
and nomads shall eat among the ruins  
of the rich.

<sup>18</sup>Woe to those who draw iniquity  
with cords of falsehood,  
who draw sin as with cart ropes,

<sup>19</sup>who say: “Let him be quick,  
let him speed his work  
that we may see it;  
let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel  
draw near,  
and let it come, that we may know it!”

<sup>20</sup>Woe to those who call evil good  
and good evil,

who put darkness for light  
and light for darkness,

who put bitter for sweet  
and sweet for bitter!

<sup>21</sup>Woe to those who are wise  
in their own eyes,  
and shrewd in their own sight!

<sup>22</sup>Woe to those who are heroes  
at drinking wine,  
and valiant men in mixing strong drink,

<sup>23</sup>who acquit the guilty for a bribe,  
and deprive the innocent of his right!

<sup>24</sup>Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours  
the stubble,  
and as dry grass sinks down in the flame,  
so their root will be as rottenness,  
and their blossom go up like dust;

for they have rejected the law  
of the LORD of hosts,  
and have despised the word  
of the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>25</sup>Therefore the anger of the LORD was  
kindled against his people,  
and he stretched out his hand against  
them and struck them,  
and the mountains quaked;  
and their corpses were as refuse  
in the midst of the streets.

For all this his anger has not turned away,  
and his hand is stretched out still.

*Additional Reading: Amos 1:1–9:15*

### **New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 2:1–12**

A Living Stone and a Holy People

<sup>1</sup>So put away all malice and all deceit and  
hypocrisy and envy and all slander. <sup>2</sup>Like  
newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual  
milk, that by it you may grow up into  
salvation—<sup>3</sup>if indeed you have tasted that the  
Lord is good.

<sup>4</sup>As you come to him, a living stone  
rejected by men but in the sight of God  
chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup>you yourselves like  
living stones are being built up as a spiritual  
house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer  
spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through  
Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,  
and whoever believes in him will not be  
put to shame.”

<sup>7</sup>So the honor is for you who believe, but for  
those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,”

<sup>8</sup>and

“A stone of stumbling,  
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

<sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

<sup>12</sup>Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

## Writing

Now the rest are eucharistic sacrifices, which are called sacrifices of praise (Leviticus 3; 7:11[–18]; Psalm 56:12). These are the preaching of the Gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the troubles of saints, yes, all good works of saints. These sacrifices are not satisfactions for those making them, nor can they be applied to others to merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation by the outward act (*ex opere operato*). They are made by those who have been reconciled. These are the sacrifices of the New Testament, as Peter teaches, “a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices” (1 Peter 2:5). Spiritual sacrifices, however, are contrasted not only with those of cattle, but even with human works offered by the

outward act, because *spiritual* refers to the movements of the Holy Spirit in us. Paul teaches the same thing, “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). “Spiritual worship” means, however, a service in which God is known and is grasped by the mind. This happens in the movements of fear and trust toward God. Therefore, it contrasts not only with the Levitical service, in which cattle are slain, but also with a service in which a work is imagined to be offered by the outward act. The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches the same thing, “Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God” (13:15). He adds the interpretation, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. He asks us to offer praises, that is, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, and the like. These benefit not by the outward act, but because of faith. This is taught by the clause “Through Him then let us continually offer,” that is, by faith in Christ.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession XXIV (XII) 25–26

## Hymnody

Christ is our cornerstone,  
On Him alone we build;  
With His true saints alone  
The courts of heav’n are filled.  
On His great love  
Our hopes we place  
Of present grace  
And joys above.

—Christ Is Our Cornerstone  
(LSB 912:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. Grant that we may be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, so that with all believers in Your promise, we would be declared worthy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1117)

## Noah

Noah, the son of Lamech (Genesis 5:30), was instructed by God to build an ark in which his family would find security from the destructive waters of a devastating flood that God warned would come. Noah built the ark, and the rains descended. The entire earth was flooded, destroying “every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals” (Genesis 7:23). After the flood waters subsided, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. When Noah determined it was safe and God confirmed it, Noah, his family, and all the animals disembarked. Then Noah built an altar and offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for having saved his family from destruction. A rainbow in the sky was declared by God to be a sign of His promise that never again would a similar flood destroy the entire earth (Genesis 8:20–22; 9:8–17). Noah is remembered and honored for his obedience, believing that God would do what He said He would.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism Longer Preface 14–20

## 30 NOVEMBER

*St. Andrew, Apostle*

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>To you I lift | up my eyes,\*

O you who are enthroned  
in the | heavens!

<sup>2</sup>Behold, as the eyes of servants look to  
the hand of their master, as the eyes of a  
maidservant to the hand of her | mistress,\*  
so our eyes look to the LORD our God,  
till he has mercy up- | on us.

<sup>3</sup>Have mercy upon us, O LORD,  
have mercy up- | on us,\*  
for we have had more than enough | of  
contempt.

<sup>4</sup>Our soul has had more than enough  
of the scorn of those who | are at ease,\*  
of the contempt | of the proud.

—Psalm 123:1–4

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 7*

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 6:1–7:9

Isaiah’s Vision of the LORD

<sup>1</sup>In the year that King Uzziah died I saw  
the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and  
lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the  
temple. <sup>2</sup>Above him stood the seraphim.  
Each had six wings: with two he covered his  
face, and with two he covered his feet, and  
with two he flew. <sup>3</sup>And one called to another  
and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory!”

<sup>4</sup>And the foundations of the thresholds shook  
at the voice of him who called, and the house  
was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup>And I said: “Woe is  
me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean

lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

<sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup>And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

Isaiah’s Commission from the LORD

<sup>8</sup>And I heard the voice of the LORD saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

<sup>9</sup>And he said, “Go, and say to this people:

“ ‘Keep on hearing,  
but do not understand;  
keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’  
<sup>10</sup>Make the heart of this people dull,  
and their ears heavy,  
and blind their eyes;  
lest they see with their eyes,  
and hear with their ears,  
and understand with their hearts,  
and turn and be healed.”

<sup>11</sup>Then I said, “How long, O Lord?”

And he said:

“Until cities lie waste  
without inhabitant,  
and houses without people,  
and the land is a desolate waste,  
<sup>12</sup>and the LORD removes people far away,  
and the forsaken places are many in  
the midst of the land.

<sup>13</sup>And though a tenth remain in it,  
it will be burned again,  
like a terebinth or an oak,  
whose stump remains  
when it is felled.”

The holy seed is its stump.

Isaiah Sent to King Ahaz

<sup>7:1</sup>In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it. <sup>2</sup>When the house of David was told, “Syria is in league with Ephraim,” the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.

<sup>3</sup>And the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer’s Field. <sup>4</sup>And say to him, ‘Be careful, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands, at the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria and the son of Remaliah. <sup>5</sup>Because Syria, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has devised evil against you, saying, <sup>6</sup>“Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves, and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it,” <sup>7</sup>thus says the Lord GOD:

“ ‘It shall not stand,  
and it shall not come to pass.

<sup>8</sup>For the head of Syria is Damascus,  
and the head of Damascus is Rezin.

And within sixty-five years  
Ephraim will be shattered from  
being a people.

<sup>9</sup>And the head of Ephraim is Samaria,  
and the head of Samaria is the son of  
Remaliah.

If you are not firm in faith,  
you will not be firm at all.’ ”

**New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 2:13–25**

Submission to Authority

<sup>13</sup>Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup>or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup>For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. <sup>16</sup>Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. <sup>17</sup>Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

<sup>18</sup>Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. <sup>19</sup>For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup>For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>21</sup>For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup>He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup>When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup>He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup>For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

**Writing**

Reverent hearts, we hold the feast of the apostle Andrew in Christendom as the first in the [Church] Year not only because it falls near the season of Advent but also because

Andrew was called first, before the other apostles, by the Lord Jesus. Even Durandus, the bishop of Mende, says, “The saints are to be honored by imitation, not adored, as if to honor them as gods. They are to be honored with love, not adored with servitude.”

Now history tells us how St. Andrew together with his fellows conducted their new office. Right away they left their nets and followed the Lord Jesus. And again, right away they left the ship and their father and followed Him. To them, Jesus is now the most precious one on earth—according to His mind they learn, according to His words they teach, according to His will they live, according to His decree they suffer and die. When St. Andrew was threatened with the cross, he said joyfully, “If I feared the punishment of the cross, I would never have preached the mystery of the cross.” Then when he saw the cross, he spoke, “Hail, precious cross, you who were dedicated by the body of Christ; may He receive me through you, who redeemed me through you.” And when he was living after three days on the cross, his hearers wanted to take him down by force, but he said, “Ah, let God take care of it! Do not make the peace of the Gospel suspect by your unnecessary revolt against the government.” That was apostolic constancy and long-suffering! This is what it means to “leave everything and follow Christ,” all the way to the last catch of fish!

—Valerius Herberger

**Hymnody**

When we seek relief  
From a long-felt grief,  
When temptations come alluring,  
Make us patient and enduring.

Show us that bright shore  
Where we weep no more.

—Jesus, Lead Thou On (*LSB* 718:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by Your grace the apostle Andrew obeyed the call of Your Son to be a disciple. Grant us also to follow the same Lord Jesus Christ in heart and life, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F01)

### St. Andrew, Apostle

St. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was born in the Galilean village of Bethsaida. Originally a disciple of St. John the Baptist, Andrew then became the first of Jesus' disciples (John 1:35–40). His name regularly appears in the Gospels near the top of the lists of the Twelve. It was he who first introduced his brother Simon to Jesus (John 1:41–42). He was, in a real sense, the first home missionary, as well as the first foreign missionary (John 12:20–22). Tradition says Andrew was martyred by crucifixion on a cross in the form of an X. In AD 357, his body is said to have been taken to the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople and later removed to the cathedral of Amalfi in Italy. Centuries later, Andrew became the patron saint of Scotland. St. Andrew's Day determines the beginning of the Western Church Year, since the First Sunday in Advent is always the Sunday nearest to St. Andrew's Day.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism Short Preface 1–13

## 1 DECEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>11</sup> Come, O children, listen to me;\*  
I will teach you the fear | of the LORD.
- <sup>12</sup> What man is there who desires life\*  
and loves many days,  
that he may | see good?
- <sup>13</sup> Keep your tongue from | evil\*  
and your lips from speak- | ing deceit.
- <sup>14</sup> Turn away from evil | and do good;\*  
seek peace and pur- | sue it.
- <sup>15</sup> The eyes of the LORD are toward  
the | righteous\*  
and his ears | toward their cry.
- <sup>16</sup> The face of the LORD is against those  
who do | evil,\*  
to cut off the memory  
of them | from the earth.
- <sup>17</sup> When the righteous cry for help,  
the | LORD hears\*  
and delivers them out  
of all their | troubles.
- <sup>18</sup> The LORD is near to the broken- | hearted\*  
and saves the crushed in | spirit.  
—Psalm 34:11–18

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 50*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 7:10–8:8

The Sign of Immanuel

<sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup>“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” <sup>13</sup>And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the LORD himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds

and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. <sup>17</sup>The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

<sup>18</sup>In that day the LORD will whistle for the fly that is at the end of the streams of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. <sup>19</sup>And they will all come and settle in the steep ravines, and in the clefts of the rocks, and on all the thornbushes, and on all the pastures.

<sup>20</sup>In that day the LORD will shave with a razor that is hired beyond the River—with the king of Assyria—the head and the hair of the feet, and it will sweep away the beard also.

<sup>21</sup>In that day a man will keep alive a young cow and two sheep, <sup>22</sup>and because of the abundance of milk that they give, he will eat curds, for everyone who is left in the land will eat curds and honey.

<sup>23</sup>In that day every place where there used to be a thousand vines, worth a thousand shekels of silver, will become briars and thorns. <sup>24</sup>With bow and arrows a man will come there, for all the land will be briars and thorns. <sup>25</sup>And as for all the hills that used to be hoed with a hoe, you will not come there for fear of briars and thorns, but they will become a place where cattle are let loose and where sheep tread.

#### The Coming Assyrian Invasion

<sup>8:1</sup>Then the LORD said to me, “Take a large tablet and write on it in common characters, ‘Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz.’ <sup>2</sup>And I will get reliable witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, to attest for me.”

<sup>3</sup>And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, “Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz; <sup>4</sup>for before the boy knows how to cry ‘My father’ or ‘My mother,’ the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria.”

<sup>5</sup>The LORD spoke to me again: <sup>6</sup>“Because this people has refused the waters of Shiloh that flow gently, and rejoice over Rezin and the son of Remaliah, <sup>7</sup>therefore, behold, the LORD is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory. And it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks, <sup>8</sup>and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck, and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel.”

#### New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 3:1–22

##### Wives and Husbands

<sup>1</sup>Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup>when they see your respectful and pure conduct. <sup>3</sup>Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—<sup>4</sup>but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. <sup>5</sup>For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup>as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

<sup>7</sup>Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to

the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Suffering for Righteousness' Sake

<sup>8</sup>Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. <sup>9</sup>Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. <sup>10</sup>For

“Whoever desires to love life  
and see good days,  
let him keep his tongue from evil  
and his lips from speaking deceit;  
<sup>11</sup>let him turn away from evil and do good;  
let him seek peace and pursue it.  
<sup>12</sup>For the eyes of the Lord are on the  
righteous,  
and his ears are open to their prayer.  
But the face of the Lord is against those  
who do evil.”

<sup>13</sup>Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup>But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup>but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup>having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup>For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

<sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits

in prison, <sup>20</sup>because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. <sup>21</sup>Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

## Writing

Our Baptism abides forever. Even though someone should fall from Baptism and sin, still we always have access to it. So we may subdue the old man again. But we do not need to be sprinkled with water again. . . . Even if we were put under the water a hundred times, it would still be only one Baptism, even though the work and sign continue and remain. Repentance, therefore, is nothing other than a return and approach to Baptism. We repeat and do what we began before, but abandoned.

I say this lest we fall into the opinion in which we were stuck for a long time. We were imagining that our Baptism is something past, which we can no longer use after we have fallen again into sin. The reason for this is that Baptism is regarded as only based on the outward act once performed (and completed). This arose from the fact that St. Jerome wrote that “repentance is the second plank by which we must swim forth and cross over the water after the ship is broken, on which we step and are carried across when we come into the Christian Church.” By this teaching Baptism's use has been abolished so that it can no longer profit us. Therefore,

Jerome's statement is not correct, or at any rate is not rightly understood. For the ship of Baptism never breaks, because . . . It is God's ordinance and not our work [1 Peter 3:20–22]. But it does happen, indeed, that we slip and fall out of the ship. Yet if anyone falls out, let him see to it that he swims up and clings to the ship until he comes into it again and lives in it, as he had done before.

In this way one sees what a great, excellent thing Baptism is. It delivers us from the devil's jaws and makes us God's own. It suppresses and takes away sin and then daily strengthens the new man. It is working and always continues working until we pass from this estate of misery to eternal glory.

—Large Catechism IV 77–83

### Hymnody

See the Lamb, our sin once taking  
 To the cross,  
 Suff'ring loss,  
 Full atonement making.  
 For our life His own He tenders,  
 And His grace  
 All our race  
 Fit for glory renders.

—All My Heart Again Rejoices  
 (LSB 360:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L03)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism Short Preface 14–28

## 2 DECEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>105</sup>Your word is a lamp | to my feet\*  
 and a light | to my path.
- <sup>106</sup>I have sworn an oath and con- | firmed it,\*  
 to keep your just and  
 righ- | teous decrees.
- <sup>107</sup>I am severely af- | flicted;\*  
 give me life, O LORD,  
 according | to your word!
- <sup>108</sup>Accept my freewill offerings  
 of praise, | O LORD,\*  
 and teach me your | just decrees.
- <sup>109</sup>I hold my life in my hand con- | tinually,\*  
 but I do not for- | get your law.
- <sup>110</sup>The wicked have laid a | snare for me,\*  
 but I do not stray from your | precepts.
- <sup>111</sup>Your testimonies are my heritage  
 for- | ever,\*  
 for they are the joy | of my heart.
- <sup>112</sup>I incline my heart to perform  
 your | statutes\*  
 forever, | to the end.  
 —Psalm 119:105–112

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 82*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 8:9–9:7

[The Coming Assyrian Invasion]

- <sup>9</sup>Be broken, you peoples, and be shattered;  
 give ear, all you far countries;  
 strap on your armor and be shattered;  
 strap on your armor and  
 be shattered.
- <sup>10</sup>Take counsel together, but it will come  
 to nothing;  
 speak a word, but it will not stand,  
 for God is with us.

Fear God, Wait for the LORD

<sup>11</sup>For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: <sup>12</sup>“Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. <sup>13</sup>But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. <sup>14</sup>And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup>And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.”

<sup>16</sup>Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples. <sup>17</sup>I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him. <sup>18</sup>Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. <sup>19</sup>And when they say to you, “Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,” should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? <sup>20</sup>To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. <sup>21</sup>They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward. <sup>22</sup>And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness.

For to Us a Child Is Born

<sup>9:1</sup>But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land  
of deep darkness,  
on them has light shined.

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they  
divide the spoil.

<sup>4</sup>For the yoke of his burden,  
and the staff for his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day  
of Midian.

<sup>5</sup>For every boot of the tramping warrior  
in battle tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup>For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be  
upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup>Of the increase of his government  
and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David  
and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it

with justice and with righteousness  
 from this time forth  
 and forevermore.  
 The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

**New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 4:1–19**

Stewards of God’s Grace

<sup>1</sup>Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, <sup>2</sup>so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. <sup>3</sup>For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. <sup>4</sup>With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; <sup>5</sup>but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup>For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

<sup>7</sup>The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. <sup>8</sup>Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup>As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: <sup>11</sup>whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Suffering as a Christian

<sup>12</sup>Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup>But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup>If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. <sup>15</sup>But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. <sup>16</sup>Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. <sup>17</sup>For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup>And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,  
 what will become of the ungodly and  
 the sinner?”

<sup>19</sup>Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

**Writing**

When faith begins, God does not forsake it; He lays the holy cross on our backs to strengthen us and to make faith powerful in us. The holy Gospel is a powerful Word. Therefore it cannot do its work without trials, and only he who tastes it is aware that it has such power. Where suffering and the cross are found, there the Gospel can show and exercise its power. It is a Word of life. Therefore it must exercise all its power in death. In the absence of dying and death it can do nothing, and no one can become aware that it has such power and is stronger than sin and death. Therefore the apostle

says “to prove you”; that is, God inflicts no glowing fire or heat—cross and suffering, which make you burn—on you for any other purpose than “to prove you,” whether you also cling to His Word. Thus it is recorded in Wisd. of Sol. 10:12 of Jacob: “God sent him an arduous contest, so that he might know that godliness is more powerful than anything.” God lays a cross on all believers in order that they may taste and prove the power of God—the power which they have taken hold of through faith.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!

“Christ is near,” we hear it say.

“Cast away the works of darkness,

All you children of the day!”

—Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding  
(LSB 345:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L04)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 1–12

## 3 DECEMBER

### Psalmody

<sup>16</sup> But I | call to God,\*

and the LORD will | save me.

<sup>17</sup> Evening and morning and at noon I utter

my com- | plaint and moan,\*

and he | hears my voice.

<sup>18</sup> He redeems my soul in safety

from the battle | that I wage,\*

for many are arrayed a- | gainst me.

<sup>19</sup> God will give ear and humble them,

he who is enthroned | from of old,\*

because they do not change

and do | not fear God.

<sup>20</sup> My companion stretched out his hand

a- | gainst his friends,\*

he violated his | covenant.

<sup>21</sup> His speech was smooth as butter,

yet war was | in his heart,\*

his words were softer than oil,

yet they were | drawn swords.

<sup>22</sup> Cast your burden on the LORD,

and he will sus- | tain you,\*

he will never permit the righteous

to | be moved.

<sup>23</sup> But you, O God, will cast them down

into the pit of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out | half their days.\*

But I will | trust in you.

—Psalm 55:16–23

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 55*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 9:8–10:11

Judgment on Arrogance and Oppression

<sup>8</sup>The Lord has sent a word against Jacob,

and it will fall on Israel;

<sup>9</sup>and all the people will know,

Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria,

who say in pride and in arrogance of heart:

<sup>10</sup>“The bricks have fallen,  
but we will build with dressed stones;  
the sycamores have been cut down,  
but we will put cedars in their place.”

<sup>11</sup>But the LORD raises the adversaries  
of Rezin against him,  
and stirs up his enemies.

<sup>12</sup>The Syrians on the east and the Philistines  
on the west  
devour Israel with open mouth.

For all this his anger has not turned away,  
and his hand is stretched out still.

<sup>13</sup>The people did not turn to him  
who struck them,  
nor inquire of the LORD of hosts.

<sup>14</sup>So the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail,  
palm branch and reed in one day—

<sup>15</sup>the elder and honored man is the head,  
and the prophet who teaches lies  
is the tail;

<sup>16</sup>for those who guide this people have been  
leading them astray,  
and those who are guided by them  
are swallowed up.

<sup>17</sup>Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over  
their young men,  
and has no compassion on their  
fatherless and widows;

for everyone is godless and an evildoer,  
and every mouth speaks folly.

For all this his anger has not turned away,  
and his hand is stretched out still.

<sup>18</sup>For wickedness burns like a fire;  
it consumes briars and thorns;

it kindles the thickets of the forest,  
and they roll upward in a column  
of smoke.

<sup>19</sup>Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts  
the land is scorched,  
and the people are like fuel for the fire;  
no one spares another.

<sup>20</sup>They slice meat on the right,  
but are still hungry,  
and they devour on the left,  
but are not satisfied;

each devours the flesh of his own arm,

<sup>21</sup>Manasseh devours Ephraim,  
and Ephraim devours Manasseh;  
together they are against Judah.

For all this his anger has not turned away,  
and his hand is stretched out still.

<sup>10:1</sup>Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees,  
and the writers who keep  
writing oppression,

<sup>2</sup>to turn aside the needy from justice  
and to rob the poor of my people  
of their right,

that widows may be their spoil,  
and that they may make the fatherless  
their prey!

<sup>3</sup>What will you do on the day of punishment,  
in the ruin that will come from afar?

To whom will you flee for help,  
and where will you leave your wealth?

<sup>4</sup>Nothing remains but to crouch among  
the prisoners  
or fall among the slain.

For all this his anger has not turned away,  
and his hand is stretched out still.

Judgment on Arrogant Assyria

<sup>5</sup>Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger;  
the staff in their hands is my fury!

<sup>6</sup>Against a godless nation I send him,  
and against the people of my wrath I  
command him,

to take spoil and seize plunder,  
and to tread them down like the mire of  
the streets.

<sup>7</sup>But he does not so intend,  
and his heart does not so think;

but it is in his heart to destroy,  
and to cut off nations not a few;

<sup>8</sup>for he says:

“Are not my commanders all kings?

<sup>9</sup>Is not Calno like Carchemish?

Is not Hamath like Arpad?

Is not Samaria like Damascus?

<sup>10</sup>As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of  
the idols,

whose carved images were greater than  
those of Jerusalem and Samaria,

<sup>11</sup>shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols  
as I have done to Samaria  
and her images?”

### New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 5:1–14

Shepherd the Flock of God

<sup>1</sup>So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: <sup>2</sup>shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; <sup>3</sup>not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup>And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. <sup>5</sup>Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

<sup>6</sup>Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your

brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup>And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup>To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

<sup>12</sup>By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. <sup>13</sup>She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. <sup>14</sup>Greet one another with the kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

### Writing

God has assuredly promised his grace to the humble [1 Peter 5:5], that is, to those who lament and despair of themselves. But no man can be thoroughly humbled until he knows that his salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, devices, endeavors, will, and works, and depends entirely on the choice, will, and work of another, namely, of God alone. For as long as he is persuaded that he himself can do even the least thing toward his salvation, he retains some self-confidence and does not altogether despair of himself, and therefore he is not humbled before God, but presumes that there is—or at least hopes or desires that there may be—some place, time, and work for him, by which he may at length attain to salvation. But when a man has no doubt that everything depends on the will of God, then he completely despairs of himself and chooses nothing for himself, but waits for God to work; then he has come close to grace, and can be saved.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

I walk in danger all the way.  
 The thought shall never leave me  
 That Satan, who has marked his prey,  
 Is plotting to deceive me.  
 This foe with hidden snares  
 May seize me unawares  
 If I should fail to watch and pray.  
 I walk in danger all the way.  
 —I Walk in Danger All the Way  
 (LSB 716:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, Your Son,  
 Jesus, triumphed over the prince of demons  
 and freed us from bondage to sin. Help us to  
 stand firm against every assault of Satan, and  
 enable us always to do Your will; through  
 Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns  
 with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now  
 and forever. (1118)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 13–23

## 4 DECEMBER

*John of Damascus, Theologian and  
Hymnwriter*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> I will extol you, my | God and King,\*  
 and bless your name forever and | ever.  
<sup>2</sup> Every day I will | bless you\*  
 and praise your name forever and | ever.  
<sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD, and greatly | to be  
 praised,\*  
 and his greatness is un- | searchable.

<sup>4</sup> One generation shall commend your works  
 to an- | other,\*  
 and shall declare your | mighty acts.  
<sup>5</sup> On the glorious splendor of your | majesty,\*  
 and on your wondrous works,  
 I will | meditate.  
<sup>6</sup> They shall speak of the might  
 of your | awesome deeds,\*  
 and I will declare your | greatness.  
<sup>7</sup> They shall pour forth the fame  
 of your abundant | goodness\*  
 and shall sing aloud of your |  
 righteousness.  
<sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and | merciful,\*  
 slow to anger and abounding  
 in | steadfast love.  
<sup>9</sup> The LORD is | good to all,\*  
 and his mercy is over all  
 that | he has made.  
 —Psalm 145:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 62*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 10:12–27a, 33–34

[Judgment on Arrogant Assyria]

<sup>12</sup>When the Lord has finished all his  
 work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he  
 will punish the speech of the arrogant heart  
 of the king of Assyria and the boastful look  
 in his eyes. <sup>13</sup>For he says:

“By the strength of my hand I have done it,  
 and by my wisdom, for I have  
 understanding;  
 I remove the boundaries of peoples,  
 and plunder their treasures;  
 like a bull I bring down those who sit  
 on thrones.  
<sup>14</sup>My hand has found like a nest  
 the wealth of the peoples;

and as one gathers eggs  
that have been forsaken,  
so I have gathered all the earth;  
and there was none that moved a wing  
or opened the mouth or chirped.”

<sup>15</sup>Shall the axe boast over him  
who hews with it,  
or the saw magnify itself against  
him who wields it?  
As if a rod should wield him who lifts it,  
or as if a staff should lift him  
who is not wood!

<sup>16</sup>Therefore the Lord GOD of hosts  
will send wasting sickness among  
his stout warriors,  
and under his glory a burning  
will be kindled,  
like the burning of fire.

<sup>17</sup>The light of Israel will become a fire,  
and his Holy One a flame,  
and it will burn and devour  
his thorns and briars in one day.

<sup>18</sup>The glory of his forest  
and of his fruitful land  
the LORD will destroy,  
both soul and body,  
and it will be as when a sick man  
wastes away.

<sup>19</sup>The remnant of the trees  
of his forest will be so few  
that a child can write them down.

#### The Remnant of Israel Will Return

<sup>20</sup>In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. <sup>21</sup>A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. <sup>22</sup>For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return.

Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness. <sup>23</sup>For the Lord GOD of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth.

<sup>24</sup>Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: “O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did. <sup>25</sup>For in a very little while my fury will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction. <sup>26</sup>And the Lord of hosts will wield against them a whip, as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb. And his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt. <sup>27</sup>And in that day his burden will depart from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck. . . .

<sup>33</sup>Behold, the Lord GOD of hosts  
will lop the boughs  
with terrifying power;  
the great in height will be hewn down,  
and the lofty will be brought low.  
<sup>34</sup>He will cut down the thickets of the  
forest with an axe,  
and Lebanon will fall  
by the Majestic One.

#### New Testament Reading: 2 Peter 1:1–21

##### Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup>May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Make Your Calling and Election Sure

<sup>3</sup>His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, <sup>4</sup>by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

<sup>5</sup>For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, <sup>6</sup>and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup>and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup>For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>9</sup>For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

<sup>10</sup>Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. <sup>11</sup>For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. <sup>13</sup>I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, <sup>14</sup>since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. <sup>15</sup>And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Christ's Glory and the Prophetic Word

<sup>16</sup>For 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. <sup>17</sup>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," <sup>18</sup>we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

<sup>19</sup>And 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, <sup>20</sup>knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup>For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Writing

12. A Christian should concern himself *«in meditation»* with the article about God's eternal election only as far as it has been revealed in God's Word. His Word presents Christ to us as the Book of Life, which He opens and reveals to us by the preaching of the Holy Gospel, as it is written in Romans 8:30, "And those whom He predestined He also called." In Him we are to seek the eternal election of the Father, who has determined in His eternal divine counsel [Ephesians 1:11–12] that He would save no one except those who know His Son Christ and truly believe in Him. Other thoughts are to be *«entirely»* banished *«from the minds of the godly»*. For they do not come from God, but from the suggestion of the evil foe. With such thoughts he attempts to weaken or entirely

remove us from the glorious comfort we have in this helpful doctrine. In other words, we know «assuredly» that out of pure grace, without any merit of our own, we have been elected in Christ to eternal life. No one can pluck us out of His hand [John 10:29]. He has not only promised this gracious election with mere words, but has also certified it with an oath and sealed it with the holy Sacraments. We can . . . call these to mind in our most severe temptations and take comfort in them, and with them we can quench the fiery darts of the devil [Ephesians 6:16].

13. Besides, we should act with the greatest diligence, to live according to God's will. As St. Peter encourages in 2 Peter 1:10, "make your calling and election sure." We should especially cling to . . . the revealed Word, which cannot and will not fail us.

—Epitome of the Formula  
of Concord XI 13–14

### Hymnody

Born Thy people to deliver;  
Born a child and yet a king!  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all-sufficient merit  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

—Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus  
(LSB 338:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, through Your servant John of Damascus, You proclaimed with power the mysteries of the true faith. Confirm our faith so that we may confess Jesus to be true God and true Man, singing the praises of the risen Lord, and so that by the power of the

resurrection we may also attain the joys of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1119)

### John of Damascus, Theologian and Hymnwriter

John (ca. AD 675–749) is known as the great compiler and summarizer of the orthodox faith and the last great Greek theologian. Born in Damascus, John gave up an influential position in the Islamic court to devote himself to the Christian faith. Around AD 716, he entered a monastery outside of Jerusalem and was ordained a priest. When the Byzantine emperor Leo the Isaurian in AD 726 issued a decree forbidding images (icons), John forcefully resisted. In his *Apostolic Discourses*, he argued for the legitimacy of the veneration of images, which earned him the condemnation of the Iconoclast Council in AD 754. John also wrote defenses of the orthodox faith against contemporary heresies. In addition, he was a gifted hymnwriter ("Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain") and contributed to the liturgy of the Byzantine churches. His greatest work was the *Fount of Wisdom*, which was a massive compendium of truth from previous Christian theologians, covering practically every conceivable doctrinal topic. John's summary of the orthodox faith left a lasting stamp on both the Eastern and Western Churches.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 24–29

5 DECEMBER

**Psalmody**

<sup>5</sup> Why should I fear in times of | trouble,\*  
 when the iniquity of those who  
 cheat me sur- | rounds me,  
<sup>6</sup> those who trust | in their wealth\*  
 and boast of the abundance  
 of their | riches?  
<sup>7</sup> Truly no man can ransom an- | other,\*  
 or give to God the price | of his life,  
<sup>8</sup> for the ransom of their life is | costly\*  
 and can nev- | er suffice,  
<sup>9</sup> that he should live on for- | ever\*  
 and never | see the pit.  
<sup>10</sup> For he sees that even the | wise die;\*  
 the fool and the stupid alike must perish  
 and leave their wealth to | others.  
<sup>11</sup> Their graves are their homes forever,  
 their dwelling places to all gener- | ations,\*  
 though they called lands  
 by their | own names.  
<sup>12</sup> Man in his pomp will | not remain;\*  
 he is like the beasts that | perish.  
<sup>15</sup> But God will ransom my soul  
 from the power | of Sheol,\*  
 for he will re- | ceive me.  
 —Psalm 49:5–12, 15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 49*

**Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 11:1–12:6**

The Righteous Reign of the Branch

<sup>1</sup> There shall come forth a shoot from the  
 stump of Jesse,  
 and a branch from his roots shall  
 bear fruit.  
<sup>2</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest  
 upon him,  
 the Spirit of wisdom and  
 understanding,

the Spirit of counsel and might,  
 the Spirit of knowledge and the fear  
 of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of the  
 LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
 or decide disputes by what  
 his ears hear,

<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge  
 the poor,

and decide with equity  
 for the meek of the earth;  
 and he shall strike the earth  
 with the rod of his mouth,

and with the breath of his lips  
 he shall kill the wicked.

<sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt  
 of his waist,

and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
 and the leopard shall lie down  
 with the young goat,

and the calf and the lion  
 and the fattened calf together;  
 and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze;  
 their young shall lie down together;  
 and the lion shall eat straw  
 like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play  
 over the hole of the cobra,  
 and the weaned child shall put his  
 hand on the adder's den.

<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or destroy  
 in all my holy mountain;  
 for the earth shall be full of the  
 knowledge of the LORD  
 as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>10</sup> In that day the root of Jesse, who shall  
 stand as a signal for the peoples—of him

shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

<sup>11</sup>In that day the LORD will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.

<sup>12</sup>He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel,

and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

<sup>13</sup>The jealousy of Ephraim shall depart, and those who harass Judah shall be cut off;

Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

<sup>14</sup>But they shall swoop down on the shoulder of the Philistines in the west, and together they shall plunder the people of the east.

They shall put out their hand against Edom and Moab,

and the Ammonites shall obey them.

<sup>15</sup>And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt, and will wave his hand over the River with his scorching breath,

and strike it into seven channels, and he will lead people across in sandals.

<sup>16</sup>And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant that remains of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt.

The LORD Is My Strength and My Song

<sup>12:1</sup>You will say in that day:

“I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me.

<sup>2</sup>“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.”

<sup>3</sup>With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. <sup>4</sup>And you will say in that day:

“Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup>“Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth.

<sup>6</sup>Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

### New Testament Reading: 2 Peter 2:1–22

False Prophets and Teachers

<sup>1</sup>But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. <sup>2</sup>And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. <sup>3</sup>And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their

condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

<sup>4</sup>For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; <sup>5</sup>if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; <sup>6</sup>if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; <sup>7</sup>and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked <sup>8</sup>(for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); <sup>9</sup>then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, <sup>10</sup>and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.

Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, <sup>11</sup>whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. <sup>12</sup>But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, <sup>13</sup>suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. <sup>14</sup>They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! <sup>15</sup>Forsaking the right way, they have

gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, <sup>16</sup>but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

<sup>17</sup>These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. <sup>18</sup>For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. <sup>19</sup>They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. <sup>20</sup>For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. <sup>21</sup>For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. <sup>22</sup>What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

## Writing

The Holy Spirit certainly wants to be present with the Word preached, heard, and considered, and He wants to be effective and work through it. . . . Furthermore, God has ordained in His counsel that the Holy Spirit should call, enlighten, and convert the elect through the Word [Romans 10:17]. He will justify and save all those who by true faith receive Christ. In the same way, He also determined in His counsel that He will harden [Romans 9:18], reprobate, and condemn those who are called through the

Word if they reject the Word and resist the Holy Spirit [Acts 7:51]. This is true even though the Spirit wants to be effective and work in them through the Word and persevere through the Word. In this way “many are called, but few are chosen” [Matthew 22:14].

Few receive the Word and follow it. Most despise the Word and will not come to the wedding [Matthew 22:3–6]. The cause for this contempt for the Word is not God’s foreknowledge, but the perverse human will. The human will rejects or perverts the means and instrument of the Holy Spirit, which God offers it through the call. It resists the Holy Spirit, who wants to be effective, and who works through the Word, as Christ says: “How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” (Matthew 23:37).

Many “hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away” (Luke 8:13). The reason is not that God was unwilling to grant grace for perseverance to those in whom He “began a good work” . . . (Philippians 1:6). The reason is that they willfully turn away again from the holy commandment, grieve and embitter the Holy Spirit, involve themselves again in the world’s filth, and redecorate their hearts as homes for the devil. For them their last situation is worse than the first. (See 2 Peter 2:10–20; [Ephesians 4:30;] Hebrews 10:26; [Luke 11:24–26].)

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord XI 39–42

## Hymnody

In these last days of great distress  
Grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness  
That we keep pure till life is spent  
Your holy Word and Sacrament.

—Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide  
(LSB 585:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. Grant that we may be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, so that with all believers in Your promise, we would be declared worthy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1120)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 30–40

## 6 DECEMBER

*Nicholas of Myra, Pastor*

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Be gracious to me, O God, for man  
tramples | on me;\*

all day long an attacker op- | presses me;

<sup>2</sup> my enemies trample on me | all day long,\*  
for many attack me | proudly.

<sup>5</sup> All day long they in- | jure my cause;\*  
all their thoughts are against me  
for | evil.

<sup>6</sup>They stir up strife, they lurk;  
 they | watch my steps,\*  
 as they have waited | for my life.  
<sup>7</sup>For their crime will | they escape?\*  
 In wrath cast down the peoples, | O God!  
<sup>8</sup>You have kept count of my tossings;  
 put my tears in your | bottle.\*  
 Are they not | in your book?  
<sup>9</sup>Then my enemies will turn back  
 in the day | when I call.\*  
 This I know, that God is | for me.  
<sup>10</sup>In God, whose | word I praise,\*  
 in the LORD, whose | word I praise,  
<sup>11</sup>in God I trust; I shall not | be afraid.\*  
 What can man | do to me?  
<sup>13</sup>For you have delivered my soul from death,  
 yes, my feet from | falling,\*  
 that I may walk before God  
 in the | light of life.  
 —Psalm 56:1–2, 5–11, 13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 56*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 14:1–23

The Restoration of Jacob

<sup>1</sup>For the LORD will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel, and will set them in their own land, and sojourners will join them and will attach themselves to the house of Jacob. <sup>2</sup>And the peoples will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the LORD's land as male and female slaves. They will take captive those who were their captors, and rule over those who oppressed them.

Israel's Remnant Taunts Babylon

<sup>3</sup>When the LORD has given you rest from your pain and turmoil and the hard service with which you were made to serve, <sup>4</sup>you

will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon:

“How the oppressor has ceased,  
 the insolent fury ceased!  
<sup>5</sup>The LORD has broken the staff  
 of the wicked,  
 the scepter of rulers,  
<sup>6</sup>that struck the peoples in wrath  
 with unceasing blows,  
 that ruled the nations in anger  
 with unrelenting persecution.  
<sup>7</sup>The whole earth is at rest and quiet;  
 they break forth into singing.  
<sup>8</sup>The cypresses rejoice at you,  
 the cedars of Lebanon, saying,  
 ‘Since you were laid low,  
 no woodcutter comes up against us.’  
<sup>9</sup>Sheol beneath is stirred up  
 to meet you when you come;  
 it rouses the shades to greet you,  
 all who were leaders of the earth;  
 it raises from their thrones  
 all who were kings of the nations.  
<sup>10</sup>All of them will answer  
 and say to you:  
 ‘You too have become as weak as we!  
 You have become like us!’  
<sup>11</sup>Your pomp is brought down to Sheol,  
 the sound of your harps;  
 maggots are laid as a bed beneath you,  
 and worms are your covers.  
<sup>12</sup>“How you are fallen from heaven,  
 O Day Star, son of Dawn!  
 How you are cut down to the ground,  
 you who laid the nations low!  
<sup>13</sup>You said in your heart,  
 ‘I will ascend to heaven;  
 above the stars of God  
 I will set my throne on high;

I will sit on the mount of assembly  
 in the far reaches of the north;  
<sup>14</sup>I will ascend above the heights  
 of the clouds;  
 I will make myself like  
 the Most High.’

<sup>15</sup>But you are brought down to Sheol,  
 to the far reaches of the pit.

<sup>16</sup>Those who see you will stare at you  
 and ponder over you:  
 ‘Is this the man who made  
 the earth tremble,  
 who shook kingdoms,  
<sup>17</sup>who made the world like a desert  
 and overthrew its cities,  
 who did not let his prisoners  
 go home?’

<sup>18</sup>All the kings of the nations lie in glory,  
 each in his own tomb;  
<sup>19</sup>but you are cast out,  
 away from your grave,  
 like a loathed branch,  
 clothed with the slain,  
 those pierced by the sword,  
 who go down to the stones of the pit,  
 like a dead body trampled underfoot.

<sup>20</sup>You will not be joined with them  
 in burial,  
 because you have destroyed  
 your land,  
 you have slain your people.

“May the offspring of evildoers  
 nevermore be named!

<sup>21</sup>Prepare slaughter for his sons  
 because of the guilt of their fathers,  
 lest they rise and possess the earth,  
 and fill the face of the world  
 with cities.”

<sup>22</sup>“I will rise up against them,” declares  
 the LORD of hosts, “and will cut off from

Babylon name and remnant, descendants  
 and posterity,” declares the LORD. <sup>23</sup>“And I  
 will make it a possession of the hedgehog,  
 and pools of water, and I will sweep it with  
 the broom of destruction,” declares the LORD  
 of hosts.

### **New Testament Reading: 2 Peter 3:1–18**

The Day of the Lord Will Come

<sup>1</sup>This is now the second letter that I am  
 writing to you, beloved. In both of them I  
 am stirring up your sincere mind by way  
 of reminder, <sup>2</sup>that you should remember  
 the predictions of the holy prophets and  
 the commandment of the Lord and Savior  
 through your apostles, <sup>3</sup>knowing this first  
 of all, that scoffers will come in the last days  
 with scoffing, following their own sinful  
 desires. <sup>4</sup>They will say, “Where is the promise  
 of his coming? For ever since the fathers  
 fell asleep, all things are continuing as they  
 were from the beginning of creation.” <sup>5</sup>For  
 they deliberately overlook this fact, that the  
 heavens existed long ago, and the earth was  
 formed out of water and through water by  
 the word of God, <sup>6</sup>and that by means of these  
 the world that then existed was deluged with  
 water and perished. <sup>7</sup>But by the same word  
 the heavens and earth that now exist are  
 stored up for fire, being kept until the day of  
 judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

<sup>8</sup>But do not overlook this one fact,  
 beloved, that with the Lord one day is as  
 a thousand years, and a thousand years  
 as one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow to fulfill  
 his promise as some count slowness, but is  
 patient toward you, not wishing that any  
 should perish, but that all should reach  
 repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will  
 come like a thief, and then the heavens will

pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! <sup>13</sup>But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Final Words

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. <sup>15</sup>And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, <sup>16</sup>as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. <sup>17</sup>You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. <sup>18</sup>But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

**Writing**

But hope deals only with good things, and only with those which lie in the future, and which pertain to the man who cherishes the hope. Since this is so, faith must be distinguished from hope: they are different

terms and likewise different concepts. Yet faith and hope have this in common: they refer to what is not seen, whether this unseen is believed in or hoped for. Thus in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is used by the enlightened defenders of the catholic rule of faith, faith is said to be “the conviction of things not seen.” However, when a man maintains that neither words nor witnesses nor even arguments, but only the evidence of present experience, determine his faith, he still ought not to be called absurd or told, “You have seen; therefore you have not believed.” For it does not follow that unless a thing is not seen it cannot be believed. Still it is better for us to use the term “faith,” as we are taught in “the sacred eloquence,” to refer to things not seen. And as for hope, the apostle says: “Hope that is seen is not hope. For if a man sees a thing, why does he hope for it? If, however, we hope for what we do not see, we then wait for it in patience.” When, therefore, our good is believed to be future, this is the same thing as hoping for it.

What, then, shall I say of love, without which faith can do nothing? There can be no true hope without love. Indeed, as the apostle James says, “Even the demons believe and tremble.”

Yet they neither hope nor love. Instead, believing as we do that what we hope for and love is coming to pass, they tremble. Therefore, the apostle Paul approves and commends the faith that works by love and that cannot exist without hope. Thus it is that love is not without hope, hope is not without love, and neither hope nor love are without faith. . . .

And now regarding *love*, which the apostle says is greater than the other two—that is, faith and hope—for the more richly

it dwells in a man, the better the man in whom it dwells. For when we ask whether someone is a good man, we are not asking what he believes, or hopes, but what he loves. Now, beyond all doubt, he who loves aright believes and hopes rightly. Likewise, he who does not love believes in vain, even if what he believes is true; he hopes in vain, even if what he hopes for is generally agreed to pertain to true happiness, unless he believes and hopes for this: that he may through prayer obtain the gift of love. For, although it is true that he cannot hope without love, it may be that there is something without which, if he does not love it, he cannot realize the object of his hopes. An example of this would be if a man hopes for life eternal—and who is there who does not love that?—and yet does not love *righteousness*, without which no one comes to it.

Now this is the true faith of Christ which the apostle commends: faith that works through love. And what it yet lacks in love it asks that it may receive, it seeks that it may find, and knocks that it may be opened unto it. For faith achieves what the law commands.

—Augustine

### Hymnody

I leave all things to God's direction;  
He loves me both in joy and woe.  
His will is good, sure His affection;  
His tender love is true, I know.  
My fortress and my rock is He:  
What pleases God, that pleases me.

—I Leave All Things to God's  
Directions (*LSB* 719:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You bestowed upon Your servant Nicholas of Myra the perpetual gift of charity. Grant Your Church the grace to deal in generosity and love with children and with all who are poor and distressed and to plead the cause of those who have no helper, especially those tossed by tempests of doubt or grief. We ask this for the sake of Him who gave His life for us, Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1121)

### Nicholas of Myra, Pastor

Of the many saints commemorated by the Christian Church, Nicholas (d. AD 342) is one of the best known. Very little is known historically of him, though there was a church of Saint Nicholas in Constantinople as early as the sixth century. Research has affirmed that there was a bishop by the name of Nicholas in the city of Myra in Lycia (part of modern Turkey) in the fourth century. From that coastal location, legends about Nicholas have traveled throughout time and space. He is associated with charitable giving in many countries around the world and is portrayed as the rescuer of sailors, the protector of children, and the friend of people in distress or need. In commemoration of *Sinte Klaas* (Dutch for “Saint Nicholas,” in English “Santa Claus”), December 6 is a day for giving and receiving gifts in many parts of Europe.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 41–48

**7 DECEMBER**

*Ambrose of Milan, Pastor and Hymnwriter*

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup>To you, | O LORD,\*  
I lift | up my soul.
- <sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust;  
let me not be | put to shame;\*  
let not my enemies exult | over me.
- <sup>3</sup>Indeed, none who wait for you  
shall be | put to shame;\*  
they shall be ashamed  
who are wantonly | treacherous.
- <sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, | O LORD;\*  
teach me | your paths.
- <sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my sal- | vation;\*  
for you I wait all the | day long.
- <sup>6</sup>Remember your mercy, O LORD,  
and your | steadfast love,\*  
for they have been | from of old.
- <sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth  
or my trans- | gressions;\*  
according to your steadfast love  
remember me, for the sake of your  
goodness, | O LORD!  
—Psalm 25:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 73*

**Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 24:1–13**

Judgment on the Whole Earth

- <sup>1</sup>Behold, the LORD will empty the earth  
and make it desolate,  
and he will twist its surface and scatter  
its inhabitants.
- <sup>2</sup>And it shall be, as with the people,  
so with the priest;  
as with the slave, so with his master;  
as with the maid, so with her mistress;

as with the buyer, so with the seller;  
as with the lender, so with the borrower;  
as with the creditor, so with the debtor.

- <sup>3</sup>The earth shall be utterly empty  
and utterly plundered;  
for the LORD has spoken this word.
- <sup>4</sup>The earth mourns and withers;  
the world languishes and withers;  
the highest people of the earth languish.
- <sup>5</sup>The earth lies defiled  
under its inhabitants;  
for they have transgressed the laws,  
violated the statutes,  
broken the everlasting covenant.
- <sup>6</sup>Therefore a curse devours the earth,  
and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;  
therefore the inhabitants of the earth are  
scorched,  
and few men are left.
- <sup>7</sup>The wine mourns,  
the vine languishes,  
all the merry-hearted sigh.
- <sup>8</sup>The mirth of the tambourines is stilled,  
the noise of the jubilant has ceased,  
the mirth of the lyre is stilled.
- <sup>9</sup>No more do they drink wine with singing;  
strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.
- <sup>10</sup>The wasted city is broken down;  
every house is shut up  
so that none can enter.
- <sup>11</sup>There is an outcry in the streets  
for lack of wine;  
all joy has grown dark;  
the gladness of the earth is banished.
- <sup>12</sup>Desolation is left in the city;  
the gates are battered into ruins.
- <sup>13</sup>For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth  
among the nations,  
as when an olive tree is beaten,  
as at the gleaning when the grape harvest  
is done.

**New Testament Reading: 1 John 1:1–2:14**

## The Word of Life

<sup>1</sup>That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—<sup>2</sup>the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—<sup>3</sup>that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

## Walking in the Light

<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup>If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

## Christ Our Advocate

<sup>2:1</sup>My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup>He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. <sup>3</sup>And by this we know that we have come to

know him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup>Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, <sup>5</sup>but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: <sup>6</sup>whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

## The New Commandment

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. <sup>8</sup>At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. <sup>9</sup>Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. <sup>10</sup>Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. <sup>11</sup>But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

<sup>12</sup>I am writing to you, little children,  
because your sins are forgiven  
for his name’s sake.

<sup>13</sup>I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know him  
who is from the beginning.  
I am writing to you, young men,  
because you have overcome  
the evil one.

I write to you, children,  
because you know the Father.

<sup>14</sup>I write to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from  
the beginning.

I write to you, young men,  
 because you are strong,  
 and the word of God abides in you,  
 and you have overcome the evil one.

## Writing

I think I shall not seem to be taking too much on myself, if, in the midst of my children, I yield to my desire to teach, seeing that the master of humility himself has said: “Come, ye children, listen to me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord” [Psalm 34:11]. . . . We therefore, being anxious to imitate his reverence for God, and not without justification in dispensing grace, deliver to you as to children those things which the Spirit of Wisdom has imparted to him, and which have been made clear to us through him, and learned by sight and by example. For we can no longer now escape from the duty of teaching which the needs of the priesthood have laid upon us, though we tried to avoid it: “For God gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” [Ephesians 4:11–12].

I do not therefore claim for myself the glory of the apostles (for who can do this save those whom the Son of God Himself has chosen?); nor the grace of the prophets, nor the virtue of the evangelists, nor the cautious care of the pastors. I only desire to attain to that care and diligence in the sacred writings, which the apostle has placed last among the duties of the saints [1 Corinthians 12:10]. And this very thing I desire, so that, in the endeavor to teach, I may be able to learn. For one is the true Master, who alone has not learned what He taught to all; but men learn before they teach, and receive from Him what they may hand on to others.

But not even this was the case with me. For I was carried off from the judgment seat, and the garb of office, to enter on the priesthood, and began to teach you what I myself had not yet learned. So it happened that I began to teach before I began to learn. Therefore I must learn and teach at the same time, since I had no leisure to learn before.

—Ambrose

## Hymnody

For You are the Father’s Son  
 Who in flesh the vict’ry won.  
 By Your mighty pow’r make whole  
 All our ills of flesh and soul.  
 —Savior of the Nations, Come  
 (LSB 332:6)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You gave Your servant Ambrose grace to proclaim the Gospel with eloquence and power. As bishop of the great congregation of Milan, he fearlessly bore reproach for the honor of Your name. Mercifully grant to all bishops and pastors such excellence in preaching and fidelity in ministering Your Word that Your people shall be partakers of the divine nature; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1122)

## Ambrose of Milan, Pastor and Hymnwriter

Born in Trier in AD 340, Ambrose was one of the four great Latin Doctors of the Church (with Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory the Great). He was a prolific author of hymns, the most common of which is *Veni, Redemptor Gentium* (“Savior

of the Nations, Come”). His name is also associated with Ambrosian Chant, a style of chanting the ancient liturgy that took hold in the province of Milan. While serving as a civil governor, Ambrose sought to bring peace among Christians in Milan who were divided into quarreling factions. When a new bishop was to be elected in AD 374, Ambrose addressed the crowd, and someone cried out, “Ambrose, bishop!” The entire gathering gave their support. This acclaim of Ambrose, a thirty-four-year-old catechumen, led to his Baptism on December 7, after which he was consecrated bishop of Milan. A strong defender of the faith, Ambrose convinced the Roman emperor Gratian in AD 379 to forbid the Arian heresy in the West. At Ambrose’s urging, Gratian’s successor, Theodosius, also publicly opposed Arianism. Ambrose died on Good Friday, April 4, 397. As a courageous doctor and musician, he upheld the truth of God’s Word.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 49–58

## 8 DECEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>In the LORD I take refuge;  
how can you say | to my soul,\*  
“Flee like a bird to your | mountain,  
<sup>2</sup>for behold, the wicked | bend the bow;\*  
they have fitted their arrow  
to the string to shoot in the dark  
at the up- | right in heart;  
<sup>3</sup>if the foundations | are destroyed,\*  
what can the | righteous do?”

- <sup>4</sup>The LORD is in his holy temple;  
the LORD’s throne is in | heaven;\*  
his eyes see, his eyelids test,  
the chil- | dren of man.  
<sup>5</sup>The LORD tests the | righteous,\*  
but his soul hates the wicked  
and the one who loves | violence.  
<sup>6</sup>Let him rain coals on the | wicked;\*  
fire and sulfur and a scorching wind  
shall be the portion | of their cup.  
<sup>7</sup>For the LORD is righteous;  
he loves | righteous deeds;\*  
the upright shall be- | hold his face.  
—Psalm 11:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 142*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 24:14–25:12

[Judgment on the Whole Earth]

- <sup>14</sup>They lift up their voices, they sing for joy;  
over the majesty of the LORD  
they shout from the west.  
<sup>15</sup>Therefore in the east give glory to the LORD;  
in the coastlands of the sea, give glory to  
the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.  
<sup>16</sup>From the ends of the earth  
we hear songs of praise,  
of glory to the Righteous One.  
But I say, “I waste away,  
I waste away. Woe is me!  
For the traitors have betrayed,  
with betrayal the traitors have betrayed.”  
<sup>17</sup>Terror and the pit and the snare  
are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth!  
<sup>18</sup>He who flees at the sound of the terror  
shall fall into the pit,  
and he who climbs out of the pit  
shall be caught in the snare.  
For the windows of heaven are opened,  
and the foundations of the earth tremble.

<sup>19</sup>The earth is utterly broken,  
the earth is split apart,  
the earth is violently shaken.

<sup>20</sup>The earth staggers like a drunken man;  
it sways like a hut;  
its transgression lies heavy upon it,  
and it falls, and will not rise again.

<sup>21</sup>On that day the LORD will punish  
the host of heaven, in heaven,  
and the kings of the earth, on the earth.

<sup>22</sup>They will be gathered together  
as prisoners in a pit;  
they will be shut up in a prison,  
and after many days they will  
be punished.

<sup>23</sup>Then the moon will be confounded  
and the sun ashamed,  
for the LORD of hosts reigns  
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,  
and his glory will be before his elders.

God Will Swallow Up Death Forever

<sup>25:1</sup>O LORD, you are my God;  
I will exalt you; I will praise your name,  
for you have done wonderful things,  
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

<sup>2</sup>For you have made the city a heap,  
the fortified city a ruin;  
the foreigners' palace is a city no more;  
it will never be rebuilt.

<sup>3</sup>Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;  
cities of ruthless nations will fear you.

<sup>4</sup>For you have been a stronghold to the poor,  
a stronghold to the needy in his distress,  
a shelter from the storm  
and a shade from the heat;  
for the breath of the ruthless is like  
a storm against a wall,  
<sup>5</sup>like heat in a dry place.

You subdue the noise of the foreigners;  
as heat by the shade of a cloud,  
so the song of the ruthless is put down.

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

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

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

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

<sup>10</sup>For the hand of the LORD will rest  
on this mountain,  
and Moab shall be trampled down  
in his place,  
as straw is trampled down in a dunghill.

<sup>11</sup>And he will spread out his hands in the  
midst of it  
as a swimmer spreads his hands  
out to swim,  
but the LORD will lay low his pompous  
pride together with the skill of his hands.

<sup>12</sup>And the high fortifications of his walls  
he will bring down,  
lay low, and cast to the ground,  
to the dust.

*Additional Reading: Obadiah 1–21*

**New Testament Reading: 1 John 2:15–19**

Do Not Love the World

<sup>15</sup>Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Warning Concerning Antichrists

<sup>18</sup>Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. <sup>19</sup>They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

**Writing**

Who, then, has the *power* in the kingdom? It is Jesus Christ alone. He declares this of Himself. He says: “I am a King.” I am *the* good Shepherd.” “One is your Master, even Christ.” The apostle calls Him “the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.” By which means Christ exercises the power in His church, though He has withdrawn His visible presence from it and sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, is clearly shown by the last declaration, with which He parted from His disciples: “*All power* is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go *therefore* and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things

whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Hence His Word, accompanied and sealed by the holy Sacraments, is the means whereby Christ exercises power in His kingdom. This is the “right scepter” with which He rules His people, this is the “rod and staff” with which He feeds His flock.

—C. F. W. Walther

**Hymnody**

What is the world to me  
With all its vaunted pleasure  
When You, and You alone,  
Lord Jesus, are my treasure!  
You only, dearest Lord,  
My soul’s delight shall be;  
You are my peace, my rest.  
What is the world to me!

—What Is The World to Me  
(LSB 730:1)

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord God, heavenly Father, in Holy Baptism You anointed us with holy chrism and healed us of all sin, making us little Christs who bear in our body Your Son, our Savior. Continue to strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit so that we may embody Christ in the world through our words and in our actions; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1123)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Large Catechism I 59–68

9 DECEMBER

**Psalmody**

<sup>6</sup>I call upon you, for you will answer me, | O God;\*  
 incline your ear to me; | hear my words.  
<sup>7</sup>Wondrously show your | steadfast love,\*  
 O Savior of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at | your right hand.  
<sup>8</sup>Keep me as the apple | of your eye;\*  
 hide me in the shadow | of your wings,  
<sup>9</sup>from the wicked who do me | violence,\*  
 my deadly enemies who sur- | round me.  
<sup>10</sup>They close their hearts to | pity;\*  
 with their mouths they speak ar- | rogantly.  
<sup>11</sup>They have now surrounded | our steps;\*  
 they set their eyes to cast us | to the ground.  
<sup>12</sup>He is like a lion ea- | ger to tear,\*  
 as a young lion lurking in | ambush.  
<sup>13</sup>Arise, | O LORD!\*  
 Confront him, sub- | due him!  
 Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword, <sup>14</sup>from men by your hand, | O LORD,\*  
 from men of the world whose portion is | in this life.  
 You fill their womb with | treasure;\*  
 they are satisfied with children, and they leave their abundance to their | infants.  
<sup>15</sup>As for me, I shall behold your face in | righteousness;\*  
 when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your | likeness.  
 —Psalm 17:6–15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 148*

**Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 26:1–19**

You Keep Him in Perfect Peace

<sup>1</sup>In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

“We have a strong city;  
 he sets up salvation  
 as walls and bulwarks.

<sup>2</sup>Open the gates,  
 that the righteous nation that keeps  
 faith may enter in.

<sup>3</sup>You keep him in perfect peace  
 whose mind is stayed on you,  
 because he trusts in you.

<sup>4</sup>Trust in the LORD forever,  
 for the Lord GOD is  
 an everlasting rock.

<sup>5</sup>For he has humbled  
 the inhabitants of the height,  
 the lofty city.

He lays it low, lays it low to the ground,  
 casts it to the dust.

<sup>6</sup>The foot tramples it,  
 the feet of the poor,  
 the steps of the needy.”

<sup>7</sup>The path of the righteous is level;  
 you make level the way  
 of the righteous.

<sup>8</sup>In the path of your judgments,  
 O LORD, we wait for you;  
 your name and remembrance  
 are the desire of our soul.

<sup>9</sup>My soul yearns for you in the night;  
 my spirit within me earnestly  
 seeks you.

For when your judgments are  
 in the earth,  
 the inhabitants of the world learn  
 righteousness.

<sup>10</sup>If favor is shown to the wicked,  
 he does not learn righteousness;

in the land of uprightness he deals  
corruptly  
and does not see the majesty  
of the LORD.

<sup>11</sup>O LORD, your hand is lifted up,  
but they do not see it.

Let them see your zeal for your people,  
and be ashamed.

Let the fire for your adversaries  
consume them.

<sup>12</sup>O LORD, you will ordain peace for us,  
for you have indeed done  
for us all our works.

<sup>13</sup>O LORD our God,  
other lords besides you  
have ruled over us,  
but your name alone we bring to  
remembrance.

<sup>14</sup>They are dead, they will not live;  
they are shades, they will not arise;  
to that end you have visited them with  
destruction  
and wiped out all remembrance  
of them.

<sup>15</sup>But you have increased  
the nation, O LORD,  
you have increased the nation;  
you are glorified;  
you have enlarged all the borders  
of the land.

<sup>16</sup>O LORD, in distress they sought you;  
they poured out a whispered prayer  
when your discipline was upon them.

<sup>17</sup>Like a pregnant woman  
who writhes and cries out  
in her pangs  
when she is near to giving birth,  
so were we because of you, O LORD;  
<sup>18</sup>we were pregnant, we writhed,  
but we have given birth to wind.

We have accomplished no deliverance  
in the earth,  
and the inhabitants of the world  
have not fallen.

<sup>19</sup>Your dead shall live;  
their bodies shall rise.

You who dwell in the dust,  
awake and sing for joy!

For your dew is a dew of light,  
and the earth will give birth  
to the dead.”

### New Testament Reading: 1 John 3:1–24

[Children of God]

<sup>1</sup>See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

<sup>4</sup>Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup>You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup>No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. <sup>7</sup>Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. <sup>8</sup>Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup>No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he

has been born of God. <sup>10</sup>By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Love One Another

<sup>11</sup>For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup>We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

<sup>16</sup>By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. <sup>17</sup>But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? <sup>18</sup>Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

<sup>19</sup>By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; <sup>20</sup>for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup>Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; <sup>22</sup>and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. <sup>23</sup>And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup>Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in

him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

**Writing**

If anyone should carefully meditate on [the patriarchs] one by one, he will realize the greatness of the gifts given by each one. For from [Jacob] came the priest and Levites and all who serve at the altar of God; from him came the Lord Jesus according to the flesh; from him came the kings and rulers and leaders of Judah; and his remaining tribes have no little glory, since God promised that "your seed shall be as the stars of the sky." All these, then, were glorified and magnified not through themselves or their works or the good deeds they had brought to completion, but through His will. Thus we also, called through His will in Christ Jesus, are justified not through ourselves nor through our own wisdom or understanding or godliness or works that we have brought to completion in piety of heart, but through faith, through which almighty God has justified all men from eternity; to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

What then shall we do, brothers? Shall we lie about and quit doing good and forsake love? May the Master never allow this to be so—at any rate not among us! Rather, let us hasten with eagerness and strong desire to bring every good work to perfection. We have seen that the righteous were adorned with good works; and the Lord Himself, having adorned Himself with good works, rejoiced. Therefore, since we have this pattern, let us go forward in His will without stint; let us work the work of righteousness with all our strength.

—Clement I

## Hymnody

Yet, though conscience' voice appall me,  
 Father, I will seek Your face;  
 Though Your child I dare not call me,  
 Yet receive me in Your grace.  
 Do not for my sins forsake me;  
 Let Your wrath not overtake me.

—Lord, to You I Make Confession  
 (LSB 608:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord, we implore You, grant Your people  
 grace to withstand the temptations of the  
 devil and with pure hearts and minds to  
 follow You, the only God; through Jesus  
 Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and  
 reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one  
 God, now and forever. (H77)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 69–77

## 10 DECEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>Incline your ear, O LORD, and | answer me,\*  
 for I am poor and | needy.
- <sup>2</sup>Preserve my life, for I am | godly;\*  
 save your servant, who trusts in you—  
 you | are my God.
- <sup>3</sup>Be gracious to me, | O Lord,\*  
 for to you do I cry | all the day.
- <sup>4</sup>Gladden the soul of your | servant,\*  
 for to you, O Lord, do I lift | up my soul.
- <sup>5</sup>For you, O Lord, are good and for- | giving,\*  
 abounding in steadfast love to all who  
 call up- | on you.

<sup>6</sup>Give ear, O LORD, | to my prayer;\*  
 listen to my | plea for grace.

<sup>7</sup>In the day of my trouble I call up- | on you,\*  
 for you | answer me.

—Psalm 86:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 130*

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 26:20–27:13

[You Keep Him in Perfect Peace]

<sup>20</sup>Come, my people, enter your chambers,  
 and shut your doors behind you;  
 hide yourselves for a little while  
 until the fury has passed by.

<sup>21</sup>For behold, the LORD is coming out  
 from his place  
 to punish the inhabitants  
 of the earth for their iniquity,  
 and the earth will disclose  
 the blood shed on it,  
 and will no more cover its slain.

The Redemption of Israel

<sup>27:1</sup>In that day the LORD with his hard and  
 great and strong sword will punish Leviathan  
 the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting  
 serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in  
 the sea.

<sup>2</sup>In that day,

“A pleasant vineyard, sing of it!

<sup>3</sup>I, the LORD, am its keeper;  
 every moment I water it.

Lest anyone punish it,  
 I keep it night and day;

<sup>4</sup>I have no wrath.

Would that I had thorns and briers to  
 battle!

I would march against them,  
 I would burn them up together.

<sup>5</sup>Or let them lay hold of my protection,  
let them make peace with me,  
let them make peace with me.”

<sup>6</sup>In days to come Jacob shall take root,  
Israel shall blossom and put forth  
shoots  
and fill the whole world with fruit.

<sup>7</sup>Has he struck them as he struck those  
who struck them?

Or have they been slain as their  
slayers were slain?

<sup>8</sup>Measure by measure, by exile you  
contended with them;  
he removed them with his fierce  
breath in the day of the east wind.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will  
be atoned for,  
and this will be the full fruit of the  
removal of his sin:

when he makes all the stones of the altars  
like chalkstones crushed to pieces,  
no Asherim or incense altars will  
remain standing.

<sup>10</sup>For the fortified city is solitary,  
a habitation deserted and forsaken,  
like the wilderness;

there the calf grazes;  
there it lies down and strips  
its branches.

<sup>11</sup>When its boughs are dry, t  
hey are broken;  
women come and make a fire  
of them.

For this is a people without discernment;  
therefore he who made them will not  
have compassion on them;  
he who formed them will show them  
no favor.

<sup>12</sup>In that day from the river Euphrates to  
the Brook of Egypt the Lord will thresh out

the grain, and you will be gleaned one by  
one, O people of Israel. <sup>13</sup>And in that day a  
great trumpet will be blown, and those who  
were lost in the land of Assyria and those  
who were driven out to the land of Egypt  
will come and worship the LORD on the holy  
mountain at Jerusalem.

### **New Testament Reading: 1 John 4:1–21**

Test the Spirits

<sup>1</sup>Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but  
test the spirits to see whether they are from  
God, for many false prophets have gone out  
into the world. <sup>2</sup>By this you know the Spirit  
of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus  
Christ has come in the flesh is from God,  
<sup>3</sup>and every spirit that does not confess Jesus  
is not from God. This is the spirit of the  
antichrist, which you heard was coming and  
now is in the world already. <sup>4</sup>Little children,  
you are from God and have overcome them,  
for he who is in you is greater than he who  
is in the world. <sup>5</sup>They are from the world;  
therefore they speak from the world, and the  
world listens to them. <sup>6</sup>We are from God.  
Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever  
is not from God does not listen to us. By this  
we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of  
error.

God Is Love

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, for love  
is from God, and whoever loves has been  
born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Anyone who  
does not love does not know God, because  
God is love. <sup>9</sup>In this the love of God was  
made manifest among us, that God sent his  
only Son into the world, so that we might  
live through him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we  
have loved God but that he loved us and sent  
his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

<sup>11</sup>Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup>By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup>Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup>So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. <sup>17</sup>By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. <sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. <sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup>And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

## Writing

Regarding the necessity or voluntary nature of good works, it is clear that in the Augsburg Confession and its Apology these expressions are often used and repeated—good works are necessary. Likewise, they say it is necessary to do good works, which necessarily follow faith and reconciliation. Likewise, we necessarily are to do, and must do, the kind of good works God has commanded. In the Holy Scriptures themselves the words *necessity*, *needful*, and

*necessary*, as well as *ought* and *must*, are used to describe what we are bound to do because of God's ordinance, command, and will. (See Romans 13:5; 1 Corinthians 9:9; Acts 5:29; John 15:12; 1 John 4:21).

It is for this reason that the sayings and propositions just mentioned (in this Christian and proper understanding) are unfairly condemned and rejected by some people. These sayings should rightly be employed and used to reject the secure, Epicurean delusion. For many create for themselves a dead faith or delusion that lacks repentance and good works. They act as though there could be true faith in a heart at the same time as the wicked intention to persevere and continue in sin [Romans 6:1–2]. This is impossible. Or, they act as though a person could have and keep true faith, righteousness, and salvation even though he is and remains a corrupt and unfruitful tree, from which no good fruit comes at all. In fact, they say this even though a person persists in sins against conscience or purposely engages again in these sins. All of this is incorrect and false.

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord IV 14–15

## Hymnody

O time of God appointed,  
O bright and holy morn!  
He comes, the king anointed,  
The Christ, the virgin-born,  
Grim death to vanquish for us,  
To open heav'n before us  
And bring us life again.

—The Only Son from Heaven  
(LSB 402:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O God of love, those who abide in love abide in You, and You abide in them. Give us such perfect love of You and our neighbor that all fear may be cast out of our hearts and we may with confidence greet You on the Day of Judgment; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1124)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 78–86

## 11 DECEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Give ear to my words, | O LORD;\*  
consider my | groaning.
- <sup>2</sup> Give attention to the sound of my cry,  
my King | and my God,\*  
for to you | do I pray.
- <sup>3</sup> O LORD, in the morning you | hear  
my voice;\*  
in the morning I prepare  
a sacrifice for | you and watch.
- <sup>4</sup> For you are not a God who delights  
in | wickedness,\*  
evil may not | dwell with you.
- <sup>5</sup> The boastful shall not stand  
be- | fore your eyes;\*  
you hate all evil- | doers.
- <sup>6</sup> You destroy those | who speak lies;\*  
the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty  
and de- | ceitful man.
- <sup>7</sup> But I, through the abundance of your  
steadfast love, will en- | ter your house.\*  
I will bow down toward your holy temple  
in the | fear of you.

- <sup>8</sup> Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness  
because of my | enemies;\*  
make your way straight be- | fore me.  
—Psalm 5:1–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 142*

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 28:14–29

A Cornerstone in Zion

- <sup>14</sup> Therefore hear the word of the Lord,  
you scoffers,  
who rule this people in Jerusalem!  
<sup>15</sup> Because you have said, “We have made  
a covenant with death,  
and with Sheol we have an agreement,  
when the overwhelming whip passes through  
it will not come to us,  
for we have made lies our refuge,  
and in falsehood we have taken shelter”;  
<sup>16</sup> therefore thus says the Lord GOD,  
“Behold, I am the one who has laid  
as a foundation in Zion,  
a stone, a tested stone,  
a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation:  
‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’  
<sup>17</sup> And I will make justice the line,  
and righteousness the plumb line;  
and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies,  
and waters will overwhelm the shelter.”  
<sup>18</sup> Then your covenant with death  
will be annulled,  
and your agreement with Sheol  
will not stand;  
when the overwhelming scourge  
passes through,  
you will be beaten down by it.  
<sup>19</sup> As often as it passes through  
it will take you;  
for morning by morning  
it will pass through,  
by day and by night;

and it will be sheer terror  
to understand the message.

<sup>20</sup>For the bed is too short to stretch oneself on,  
and the covering too narrow  
to wrap oneself in.

<sup>21</sup>For the LORD will rise up  
as on Mount Perazim;  
as in the Valley of Gibeon  
he will be roused;

to do his deed—strange is his deed!  
and to work his work—alien is his work!

<sup>22</sup>Now therefore do not scoff,  
lest your bonds be made strong;  
for I have heard a decree of destruction  
from the Lord GOD of hosts against  
the whole land.

<sup>23</sup>Give ear, and hear my voice;  
give attention, and hear my speech.

<sup>24</sup>Does he who plows for sowing  
plow continually?  
Does he continually open  
and harrow his ground?

<sup>25</sup>When he has leveled its surface,  
does he not scatter dill, sow cumin,  
and put in wheat in rows  
and barley in its proper place,  
and emmer as the border?

<sup>26</sup>For he is rightly instructed;  
his God teaches him.

<sup>27</sup>Dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge,  
nor is a cart wheel rolled over cumin,  
but dill is beaten out with a stick,  
and cumin with a rod.

<sup>28</sup>Does one crush grain for bread?  
No, he does not thresh it forever;  
when he drives his cart wheel over it  
with his horses, he does not crush it.

<sup>29</sup>This also comes from the LORD of hosts;  
he is wonderful in counsel  
and excellent in wisdom.

## New Testament Reading: 1 John 5:1–21

Overcoming the World

<sup>1</sup>Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. <sup>2</sup>By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. <sup>3</sup>For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. <sup>4</sup>For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup>Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Testimony Concerning the Son of God

<sup>6</sup>This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. <sup>7</sup>For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup>the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. <sup>9</sup>If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. <sup>10</sup>Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

That You May Know

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. <sup>14</sup>And this is

the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. <sup>15</sup>And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

<sup>16</sup>If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. <sup>17</sup>All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

<sup>18</sup>We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

<sup>19</sup>We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

<sup>20</sup>And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

<sup>21</sup>Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

*Additional Reading: 2 John 1–13*

*Additional Reading: 3 John 1–15*

## Writing

25. He is not righteous who does much, but he who, without work, believes much in Christ.

For the righteousness of God is not acquired by means of acts frequently repeated, as Aristotle taught, but it is imparted by faith, for “He who through faith is righteous shall live” (Rom. 1[:17]), and “Man believes with his heart and so is justified” (Rom. 10[:10]). Therefore I wish to have the words “without work” understood in the following manner: Not

that the righteous person does nothing, but that his works do not make him righteous, rather that his righteousness creates works. For grace and faith are infused without our works. After they have been imparted the works follow. Thus Rom. 3[:20] states, “No human being will be justified in His sight by works of the law,” and, “For we hold that man is justified by faith apart from works of law” (Rom. 3[:28]). In other words, works contribute nothing to justification. Therefore man knows that works which he does by such faith are not his but God’s. For this reason he does not seek to become justified or glorified through them, but seeks God. His justification by faith in Christ is sufficient to him. Christ is his wisdom, righteousness, etc., as I Cor. 1[:30] has it, that he himself may be Christ’s vessel and instrument.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Water, blood, and Spirit crying,  
By their witness testifying  
To the One whose death-defying  
Life has come, with life for all.

—Water, Blood, and Spirit Crying  
(LSB 597:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, Your Son, Jesus Christ, began His ministry through a water Baptism in the Jordan River that led Him to a bloody baptism on the cross. Even now, He saves us through the water of Holy Baptism and the blood of the cup of the new testament. Grant us steadfastness to trust in water and blood as the means by which He continues to offer us His gracious presence; for He lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1125)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 87–95

### 12 DECEMBER

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the  
LORD, for | he is good,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!
- <sup>2</sup> Who can utter the mighty deeds | of  
the LORD,\*  
or declare | all his praise?
- <sup>3</sup> Blessèd are they who observe | justice,\*  
who do righteousness | at all times!
- <sup>4</sup> Remember me, O LORD, when you show  
favor to your | people;\*  
help me when you | save them,
- <sup>5</sup> that I may look upon the prosperity  
of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice  
in the gladness of your | nation,\*  
that I may glory with your in- | heritance.  
—Psalm 106:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 106*

#### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 29:1–14

The Siege of Jerusalem

- <sup>1</sup> Ah, Ariel, Ariel,  
the city where David encamped!  
Add year to year;  
let the feasts run their round.
- <sup>2</sup> Yet I will distress Ariel,  
and there shall be moaning  
and lamentation,  
and she shall be to me like an Ariel.
- <sup>3</sup> And I will encamp against you  
all around,  
and will besiege you with towers

and I will raise siegeworks  
against you.

<sup>4</sup> And you will be brought low;  
from the earth you shall speak,  
and from the dust your speech  
will be bowed down;  
your voice shall come from the ground  
like the voice of a ghost,  
and from the dust your speech  
shall whisper.

<sup>5</sup> But the multitude of your foreign foes  
shall be like small dust,  
and the multitude of the ruthless  
like passing chaff.

And in an instant, suddenly,  
<sup>6</sup> you will be visited by the LORD  
of hosts

with thunder and with earthquake  
and great noise,  
with whirlwind and tempest,  
and the flame of a devouring fire.

<sup>7</sup> And the multitude of all the nations  
that fight against Ariel,  
all that fight against her and  
her stronghold and distress her,  
shall be like a dream, a vision  
of the night.

<sup>8</sup> As when a hungry man dreams  
he is eating  
and awakes with his hunger  
not satisfied,

or as when a thirsty man dreams  
he is drinking  
and awakes faint, with his thirst  
not quenched,  
so shall the multitude of all the nations be  
that fight against Mount Zion.

<sup>9</sup> Astonish yourselves and be astonished;  
blind yourselves and be blind!  
Be drunk, but not with wine;  
stagger, but not with strong drink!

<sup>10</sup>For the LORD has poured out upon you  
a spirit of deep sleep,  
and has closed your eyes (the prophets),  
and covered your heads (the seers).

<sup>11</sup>And the vision of all this has become  
to you like the words of a book that is sealed.  
When men give it to one who can read,  
saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it  
is sealed." <sup>12</sup>And when they give the book to  
one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he  
says, "I cannot read."

<sup>13</sup>And the LORD said:  
"Because this people draw near with their  
mouth

and honor me with their lips,  
while their hearts are far from me,  
and their fear of me is a commandment  
taught by men,

<sup>14</sup>therefore, behold, I will again  
do wonderful things  
with this people,  
with wonder upon wonder;  
and the wisdom of their wise men  
shall perish,  
and the discernment of their  
discerning men shall be hidden."

### New Testament Reading: Jude 1–25

<sup>1</sup>Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and  
brother of James,

To those who are called, beloved in God  
the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup>May mercy, peace, and  
love be multiplied to you.

<sup>3</sup>Beloved, although I was very eager to  
write to you about our common salvation, I  
found it necessary to write appealing to you  
to contend for the faith that was once for all  
delivered to the saints. <sup>4</sup>For certain people  
have crept in unnoticed who long ago were

designated for this condemnation, ungodly  
people, who pervert the grace of our God  
into sensuality and deny our only Master and  
Lord, Jesus Christ.

<sup>5</sup>Now I want to remind you, although  
you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved  
a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward  
destroyed those who did not believe. <sup>6</sup>And  
the angels who did not stay within their own  
position of authority, but left their proper  
dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under  
gloomy darkness until the judgment of the  
great day—<sup>7</sup>just as Sodom and Gomorrah  
and the surrounding cities, which likewise  
indulged in sexual immorality and pursued  
unnatural desire, serve as an example by  
undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

<sup>8</sup>Yet in like manner these people  
also, relying on their dreams, defile the  
flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the  
glorious ones. <sup>9</sup>But when the archangel  
Michael, contending with the devil, was  
disputing about the body of Moses, he did  
not presume to pronounce a blasphemous  
judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."

<sup>10</sup>But these people blaspheme all that they  
do not understand, and they are destroyed  
by all that they, like unreasoning animals,  
understand instinctively. <sup>11</sup>Woe to them!  
For they walked in the way of Cain and  
abandoned themselves for the sake of gain  
to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's  
rebellion. <sup>12</sup>These are hidden reefs at your  
love feasts, as they feast with you without  
fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless  
clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees  
in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; <sup>13</sup>wild  
waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their  
own shame; wandering stars, for whom the  
gloom of utter darkness has been reserved  
forever.

<sup>14</sup>It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, <sup>15</sup>to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” <sup>16</sup>These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

<sup>17</sup>But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” <sup>19</sup>It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, <sup>21</sup>keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. <sup>22</sup>And have mercy on those who doubt; <sup>23</sup>save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

<sup>24</sup>Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, <sup>25</sup>to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

## Writing

The doctrine of the goals and effects of justification is clear and easy, but it is useful and necessary to repeat it at this point in our study of justification, for several important reasons. 1. That justification is

received by faith should serve as a constant warning regarding the end or goal of the doctrine of justification, so that we do not misuse this teaching in order to cultivate or confirm licentiousness, as the Epistle of Jude admonishes in v. 4: “transposing or transferring or perverting the grace of God into licentiousness.” 2. Just as we have a uniting of causes and effects in nature, so when we have the causes for our justification, we should have no doubt concerning the effects, namely salvation and eternal life. 3. That believers might know how to perform good works; and so that they will not seek a pretext to avoid doing them, Scripture says that renewal is an effect or result of justification. 4. Christ says in Matt. 7:16–20 that we are to judge a tree by its fruits. Paul in 2 Cor. 13:5 says: “Examine yourselves to see whether you are holding to your faith”; cf. 2 Peter 1:10: “Make your calling sure.” We judge the cause by the effects. 5. This distinction between causes and effects is also useful for showing that sanctification or renewal is to be distinguished from justification, and that the new obedience is not a cause or an essential part of our justification, because it is an effect or a result. 6. By means of this distinction we can also answer the difficult question: When the believing heart in its trials feels no joy, peace, or happiness, is faith at that time, when it lays hold on Christ in the promise and tries to sustain itself with comfort, able to determine that it has the true righteousness unto life eternal? There is a difference between the causes, or the form of our righteousness before God and its effects. When the form or formal cause of our righteousness has been established, as described above, then faith ought to be assured of the acceptance

of our person before God, unless it wants to make Him a liar. Indeed, the effects show the cause, and when the effects cease, then we may conclude that the cause does not actually exist either.

In the case of our justification, which is the full and perfect acceptance of the believer unto eternal life, certain effects in our life, such as the new obedience, follow rather slowly because of the weakness of our flesh. Some effects follow the way Scripture says, 2 Cor. 5:7: “We walk by faith and not by sight.” Likewise Rom. 4:18: “In hope he believed against hope.” Col. 3:3: “Our life is hidden with Christ in God”; Ps. 31:19: “You have laid up good things for those who fear you.”

—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

Preserve Your Word, O Savior,  
To us this latter day,  
And let Your kingdom flourish;  
Enlarge Your Church, we pray.  
O keep our faith from failing;  
Keep hope’s bright star aglow.  
Let nothing from truth turn us  
While living here below.

—Preserve Your Word, O Savior  
(LSB 658:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, we implore You, show Your mercy to Your humble servants that we, who put no trust in our own merits, may not be dealt with after the severity of Your judgment but according to Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H85)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 96–102

## 13 DECEMBER

*Lucia, Martyr*

### Psalmody

- <sup>20</sup> I have found David, my | servant;\*  
with my holy oil I have a- | nointed him,  
<sup>21</sup>so that my hand shall be  
estab- | lished with him;\*  
my arm also shall | strengthen him.  
<sup>22</sup>The enemy shall not out- | wit him;\*  
the wicked shall not | humble him.  
<sup>23</sup> I will crush his foes be- | fore him\*  
and strike down those who | hate him.  
<sup>24</sup> My faithfulness and my steadfast love  
shall | be with him,\*  
and in my name shall his horn  
be ex- | alted.  
<sup>25</sup> I will set his hand | on the sea\*  
and his right hand on the | rivers.  
<sup>26</sup> He shall cry to me, ‘You are my | Father,\*  
my God, and the Rock  
of my sal- | vation.’  
<sup>27</sup> And I will make him the | firstborn,\*  
the highest of the kings | of the earth.  
<sup>28</sup> My steadfast love I will keep  
for him for- | ever,\*  
and my covenant will  
stand | firm for him.  
<sup>29</sup> I will establish his offspring for- | ever\*  
and his throne as the days  
of the | heavens.  
—Psalm 89:20–29

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 143*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Isaiah 29:15–30:14**

[The Siege of Jerusalem]

<sup>15</sup>Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD  
 your counsel,

whose deeds are in the dark,  
 and who say, “Who sees us?  
 Who knows us?”

<sup>16</sup>You turn things upside down!  
 Shall the potter be regarded as the clay,  
 that the thing made should say  
 of its maker,

“He did not make me”;  
 or the thing formed say of him who  
 formed it,

“He has no understanding”?

<sup>17</sup>Is it not yet a very little while  
 until Lebanon shall be turned  
 into a fruitful field,  
 and the fruitful field shall be  
 regarded as a forest?

<sup>18</sup>In that day the deaf shall hear  
 the words of a book,  
 and out of their gloom and darkness  
 the eyes of the blind shall see.

<sup>19</sup>The meek shall obtain fresh joy  
 in the LORD,  
 and the poor among mankind shall  
 exult in the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>20</sup>For the ruthless shall come to nothing  
 and the scoffer cease,  
 and all who watch to do evil  
 shall be cut off,

<sup>21</sup>who by a word make a man out  
 to be an offender,  
 and lay a snare for him who reproveth  
 in the gate,  
 and with an empty plea turn aside  
 him who is in the right.

<sup>22</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD, who  
 redeemed Abraham, concerning the house  
 of Jacob:

“Jacob shall no more be ashamed,  
 no more shall his face grow pale.

<sup>23</sup>For when he sees his children,  
 the work of my hands, in his midst,  
 they will sanctify my name;  
 they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob  
 and will stand in awe of the God  
 of Israel.

<sup>24</sup>And those who go astray in spirit will  
 come to understanding,  
 and those who murmur  
 will accept instruction.”

Do Not Go Down to Egypt

<sup>30:1</sup>“Ah, stubborn children,”  
 declares the LORD,  
 “who carry out a plan, but not mine,  
 and who make an alliance,  
 but not of my Spirit,

that they may add sin to sin;  
<sup>2</sup>who set out to go down to Egypt,  
 without asking for my direction,  
 to take refuge in the protection  
 of Pharaoh

and to seek shelter in the shadow  
 of Egypt!

<sup>3</sup>Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh  
 turn to your shame,  
 and the shelter in the shadow  
 of Egypt to your humiliation.

<sup>4</sup>For though his officials are at Zoan  
 and his envoys reach Hanes,

<sup>5</sup>everyone comes to shame  
 through a people that cannot  
 profit them,  
 that brings neither help nor profit,  
 but shame and disgrace.”

<sup>6</sup>An oracle on the beasts of the Negeb.  
Through a land of trouble and anguish,  
from where come the lioness  
and the lion,  
the adder and the flying fiery serpent,  
they carry their riches  
on the backs of donkeys,  
and their treasures on the humps  
of camels,  
to a people that cannot profit them.  
<sup>7</sup>Egypt's help is worthless and empty;  
therefore I have called her  
"Rahab who sits still."

A Rebellious People

<sup>8</sup>And now, go, write it before them  
on a tablet  
and inscribe it in a book,  
that it may be for the time to come  
as a witness forever.  
<sup>9</sup>For they are a rebellious people,  
lying children,  
children unwilling to hear  
the instruction of the LORD;  
<sup>10</sup>who say to the seers, "Do not see,"  
and to the prophets, "Do not  
prophesy to us what is right;  
speak to us smooth things,  
prophesy illusions,  
<sup>11</sup>leave the way, turn aside from the path,  
let us hear no more about the Holy  
One of Israel."  
<sup>12</sup>Therefore thus says the Holy One  
of Israel,  
"Because you despise this word  
and trust in oppression and  
perverseness  
and rely on them,  
<sup>13</sup>therefore this iniquity shall be to you  
like a breach in a high wall, bulging  
out, and about to collapse,

whose breaking comes suddenly,  
in an instant;  
<sup>14</sup>and its breaking is like that of a potter's  
vessel  
that is smashed so ruthlessly  
that among its fragments not a shard  
is found  
with which to take fire from the  
hearth,  
or to dip up water out of the cistern."

**New Testament Reading:**  
**Revelation 1:1–20**

Prologue

<sup>1</sup>The revelation of Jesus Christ, which  
God gave him to show to his servants the  
things that must soon take place. He made  
it known by sending his angel to his servant  
John, <sup>2</sup>who bore witness to the word of God  
and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to  
all that he saw. <sup>3</sup>Blessed is the one who reads  
aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed  
are those who hear, and who keep what is  
written in it, for the time is near.

Greeting to the Seven Churches

<sup>4</sup>John to the seven churches that are  
in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is  
and who was and who is to come, and from  
the seven spirits who are before his throne,  
<sup>5</sup>and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness,  
the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of  
kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us  
from our sins by his blood <sup>6</sup>and made us a  
kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to  
him be glory and dominion forever and ever.  
Amen. <sup>7</sup>Behold, he is coming with the clouds,  
and every eye will see him, even those who  
pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will  
wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

<sup>8</sup>“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Vision of the Son of Man

<sup>9</sup>I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. <sup>10</sup>I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet <sup>11</sup>saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

<sup>12</sup>Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup>and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. <sup>14</sup>The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup>his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. <sup>16</sup>In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

<sup>17</sup>When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, <sup>18</sup>and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. <sup>19</sup>Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. <sup>20</sup>As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the

angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

## Writing

Luke points out that the pedigree which traces the generation of our Lord back to Adam contains seventy-two generations, connecting the end with the beginning, and implying that it is He who has summed up in Himself all nations dispersed from Adam downward and all languages and generations of men, together with Adam himself. Hence also was Adam himself termed by Paul “the figure of Him that was to come,” because the Word, the Maker of all things, had formed beforehand for Himself the future dispensation of the human race, connected with the Son of God; God having predestined that the first man should be of an animal nature, with this view, that he might be saved by the spiritual One. . . .

In accordance with this design, Mary the Virgin is found obedient, saying, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Your word.” But Eve was disobedient; for she did not obey when as yet she was a virgin. And even as she, having indeed a husband, Adam, but being nevertheless as yet a virgin . . . having become disobedient, was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race; so also did Mary, having a man betrothed [to her], and being nevertheless a virgin, by yielding obedience, become the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race. . . . For the Lord, having been born “the First-begotten of the dead,” and receiving into His bosom the ancient fathers, has regenerated them into the life of God, He having been made Himself the beginning of those that live, as Adam became

the beginning of those who die. Wherefore also Luke, commencing the genealogy with the Lord, carried it back to Adam, indicating that it was He who regenerated them into the Gospel of life, and not they Him. And thus also it was that the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith.

—Irenaeus

### Hymnody

Of the Father's love begotten  
 Ere the worlds began to be,  
 He is Alpha and Omega,  
 He the source, the ending He,  
 Of the things that are, that have been,  
 And that future years shall see  
 Evermore and evermore.

—Of the Father's Love Begotten  
 (LSB 384:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O Almighty God, by whose grace and power Your holy martyr Lucia triumphed over suffering and remained ever faithful unto death, grant us, who now remember her with thanksgiving, to be so true in our witness to You in this world that we may receive with her new eyes without tears and the crown of light and life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1126)

### Lucia, Martyr

One of the victims of the great persecution of Christians under the Roman emperor Diocletian, Lucia met her death at

Syracuse on the island of Sicily in AD 304. Known for her charity, "Santa Lucia" (as she is called in Italy) gave away her dowry and remained a virgin until her execution by the sword. The name *Lucia* means "light," and, because of that, festivals of light commemorating her became popular throughout Europe, especially in the Scandinavian countries. There her feast day corresponds with the time of year when there is the least amount of daylight. In artistic expression, Lucia is often portrayed in a white baptismal gown, wearing a wreath of candles on her head.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 103–111

## 14 DECEMBER

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
 whom | shall I fear?\*

The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
 of whom shall I | be afraid?

<sup>4</sup> One thing have I asked of the LORD,  
 that will I seek | after:\*

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
 all the days of my life, to gaze upon  
 the beauty of the LORD and to inquire  
 in his | temple.

<sup>5</sup> For he will hide me in his shelter  
 in the day of | trouble;\*

he will conceal me under the cover of his  
 tent; he will lift me high up- | on a rock.

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, | O LORD,\*  
 and lead me on a level path  
 because of my | enemies.

<sup>12</sup> Give me not up to the will of my  
adver- | saries;\*  
for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they breathe out | violence.

<sup>13</sup> I believe that I shall look upon the  
goodness | of the LORD\*  
in the land of the | living!

<sup>14</sup> Wait | for the LORD;\*  
be strong, and let your heart take  
courage; wait | for the LORD!  
—Psalm 27:1, 4–5, 11–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 24*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 30:15–26

[A Rebellious People]

<sup>15</sup> For thus said the Lord God, the Holy  
One of Israel,

“In returning and rest you shall be saved;  
in quietness and in trust shall be  
your strength.”

But you were unwilling, <sup>16</sup>and you said,  
“No! We will flee upon horses”;  
therefore you shall flee away;  
and, “We will ride upon swift steeds”;  
therefore your pursuers shall be swift.

<sup>17</sup> A thousand shall flee at the threat of one;  
at the threat of five you shall flee,  
till you are left  
like a flagstaff on the top  
of a mountain,  
like a signal on a hill.

The LORD Will Be Gracious

<sup>18</sup> Therefore the LORD waits  
to be gracious to you,  
and therefore he exalts himself  
to show mercy to you.

For the LORD is a God of justice;  
blessed are all those  
who wait for him.

<sup>19</sup> For a people shall dwell in Zion, in  
Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will  
surely be gracious to you at the sound of your  
cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you.

<sup>20</sup> And though the Lord give you the bread of  
adversity and the water of affliction, yet your  
Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but  
your eyes shall see your Teacher. <sup>21</sup> And your  
ears shall hear a word behind you, saying,  
“This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to  
the right or when you turn to the left. <sup>22</sup> Then  
you will defile your carved idols overlaid  
with silver and your gold-plated metal  
images. You will scatter them as unclean  
things. You will say to them, “Be gone!”

<sup>23</sup> And he will give rain for the seed with  
which you sow the ground, and bread, the  
produce of the ground, which will be rich  
and plenteous. In that day your livestock will  
graze in large pastures, <sup>24</sup>and the oxen and  
the donkeys that work the ground will eat  
seasoned fodder, which has been winnowed  
with shovel and fork. <sup>25</sup> And on every lofty  
mountain and every high hill there will be  
brooks running with water, in the day of  
the great slaughter, when the towers fall.  
<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the light of the moon will be  
as the light of the sun, and the light of the  
sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven  
days, in the day when the LORD binds up  
the brokenness of his people, and heals the  
wounds inflicted by his blow.

### New Testament Reading: Revelation 2:1–29

To the Church in Ephesus

<sup>1</sup> “To the angel of the church in Ephesus  
write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven  
stars in his right hand, who walks among the  
seven golden lampstands.

<sup>2</sup>“ I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. <sup>3</sup>I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup>But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. <sup>6</sup>Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. <sup>7</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

To the Church in Smyrna

<sup>8</sup>“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.

<sup>9</sup>“ I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup>Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. <sup>11</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.’

To the Church in Pergamum

<sup>12</sup>“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

<sup>13</sup>“ I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. <sup>14</sup>But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup>So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. <sup>16</sup>Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. <sup>17</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’

To the Church in Thyatira

<sup>18</sup>“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

<sup>19</sup>“ I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. <sup>20</sup>But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup>I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. <sup>22</sup>Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, <sup>23</sup>and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will

give to each of you according to your works. <sup>24</sup>But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. <sup>25</sup>Only hold fast what you have until I come. <sup>26</sup>The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, <sup>27</sup>and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup>And I will give him the morning star. <sup>29</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ ”

## Writing

The doctrine is not of compulsion; the Word of life is of free will. Whoever desires to hear the doctrine, let him cleanse the field of his will so that the good seed may not fall among the thorns of vain questions. If you would heed the Word of life, cut yourself off from evil things. The hearing of the Word profits nothing to the man who is busy with sins. If you want to be good, do not love dissolute customs. First, trust in God, and then listen to His Law.

You cannot hear His words while you do not know yourself. And if you keep His judgments while your understanding is apart from Him, who will give you your reward? Who will guard your payment for you? You were baptized in His name, so confess His name! In the Persons and in the naming, Father and Son and Holy Spirit—three names and Persons—these three shall be a wall against divisions and disputes for you. Do not doubt the truth, lest through the truth you may perish. You were baptized from the water; you have put on Christ in His naming;

the seat of the Lord is on your person and His stamp on your forehead. See that you do not become another’s possession, for you have no other Lord. He is one who formed us in His mercy; He is one who redeemed us on His cross. It is He who guides our life, who has power over our feebleness, who brings to pass our resurrection. He rewards us according to our works. Blessed is he who confesses Him, and hears and keeps His commandments! You, O man, are a son of God, who is high over all. See that you do not vex the good and gracious Father by your works.

—Ephraim Syrus

## Hymnody

Give to Your Word impressive pow’r,  
That in our hearts from this good hour  
As fire it may be glowing,  
That in true Christian unity  
We faithful witnesses may be,  
Your glory ever showing.  
Hear us, cheer us  
By Your teaching;  
Let our preaching  
And our labor  
Praise You, Lord, and serve our neighbor.  
—O Holy Spirit, Enter In (*LSB* 913:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, You sent Your angels to the churches of Asia Minor to announce to them either their fidelity to the Gospel or their departure from the true faith. By the preaching of today’s pastors, continue to bring to our churches the Good News of Your liberating death and resurrection by calling us to repentance and faith; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1127)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 112–119

### 15 DECEMBER

#### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Praise | the LORD!\*

Praise the LORD, | O my soul!

<sup>2</sup> I will praise the LORD as long | as I live;\*

I will sing praises to my God  
while I have my | being.

<sup>3</sup> Put not your trust in | princes,\*

in a son of man, in whom there  
is no sal- | vation.

<sup>4</sup> When his breath departs

he returns | to the earth;\*

on that very day his plans | perish.

<sup>5</sup> Blessèd is he whose help

is the God of | Jacob,\*

whose hope is in the | LORD his God,

<sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth, the sea,

and all that is | in them,\*

who keeps faith for- | ever;

<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for | the oppressed,\*

who gives food to the | hungry.

—Psalm 146:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 80*

#### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 30:27–31:9

[The LORD Will Be Gracious]

<sup>27</sup> Behold, the name of the LORD comes  
from afar,

burning with his anger,  
and in thick rising smoke;

his lips are full of fury,

and his tongue is like

a devouring fire;

<sup>28</sup> his breath is like an overflowing stream

that reaches up to the neck;

to sift the nations with the sieve

of destruction,

and to place on the jaws of the

peoples a bridle that leads astray.

<sup>29</sup> You shall have a song as in the night  
when a holy feast is kept, and gladness of

heart, as when one sets out to the sound of  
the flute to go to the mountain of the LORD,

to the Rock of Israel. <sup>30</sup> And the LORD will  
cause his majestic voice to be heard and the

descending blow of his arm to be seen, in  
furious anger and a flame of devouring fire,

with a cloudburst and storm and hailstones.

<sup>31</sup> The Assyrians will be terror-stricken at  
the voice of the LORD, when he strikes with

his rod. <sup>32</sup> And every stroke of the appointed  
staff that the LORD lays on them will be to

the sound of tambourines and lyres. Battling  
with brandished arm, he will fight with them.

<sup>33</sup> For a burning place has long been prepared;  
indeed, for the king it is made ready, its pyre

made deep and wide, with fire and wood in  
abundance; the breath of the LORD, like a

stream of sulfur, kindles it.

Woe to Those Who Go Down to Egypt

<sup>31:1</sup> Woe to those who go down

to Egypt for help

and rely on horses,

who trust in chariots

because they are many

and in horsemen

because they are very strong,

but do not look to the Holy One of Israel

or consult the LORD!

<sup>2</sup>And yet he is wise and brings disaster;  
 he does not call back his words,  
 but will arise against the house  
 of the evildoers  
 and against the helpers  
 of those who work iniquity.

<sup>3</sup>The Egyptians are man, and not God,  
 and their horses are flesh,  
 and not spirit.

When the LORD stretches out his hand,  
 the helper will stumble,  
 and he who is helped will fall,  
 and they will all perish together.

<sup>4</sup>For thus the LORD said to me,  
 “As a lion or a young lion growls  
 over his prey,  
 and when a band of shepherds  
 is called out against him  
 he is not terrified by their shouting  
 or daunted at their noise,  
 so the LORD of hosts will come down  
 to fight on Mount Zion  
 and on its hill.

<sup>5</sup>Like birds hovering, so the Lord of hosts  
 will protect Jerusalem;  
 he will protect and deliver it;  
 he will spare and rescue it.”

<sup>6</sup>Turn to him from whom people have  
 deeply revolted, O children of Israel. <sup>7</sup>For in  
 that day everyone shall cast away his idols of  
 silver and his idols of gold, which your hands  
 have sinfully made for you.

<sup>8</sup>“And the Assyrian shall fall by a sword,  
 not of man;  
 and a sword, not of man, shall  
 devour him;  
 and he shall flee from the sword,  
 and his young men shall be put to  
 forced labor.

<sup>9</sup>His rock shall pass away in terror,  
 and his officers desert the standard  
 in panic,”  
 declares the Lord, whose fire is in Zion,  
 and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

### **New Testament Reading: Revelation 3:1–22**

To the Church in Sardis

<sup>1</sup>“And to the angel of the church in Sardis  
 write: ‘The words of him who has the seven  
 spirits of God and the seven stars.

“ ‘I know your works. You have the  
 reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

<sup>2</sup>Wake up, and strengthen what remains and  
 is about to die, for I have not found your  
 works complete in the sight of my God.

<sup>3</sup>Remember, then, what you received and  
 heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not  
 wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will  
 not know at what hour I will come against  
 you. <sup>4</sup>Yet you have still a few names in Sardis,  
 people who have not soiled their garments,  
 and they will walk with me in white, for they  
 are worthy. <sup>5</sup>The one who conquers will be  
 clothed thus in white garments, and I will  
 never blot his name out of the book of life. I  
 will confess his name before my Father and  
 before his angels. <sup>6</sup>He who has an ear, let him  
 hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

To the Church in Philadelphia

<sup>7</sup>“And to the angel of the church in  
 Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy  
 one, the true one, who has the key of David,  
 who opens and no one will shut, who shuts  
 and no one opens.

<sup>8</sup>“ ‘I know your works. Behold, I have set  
 before you an open door, which no one is able  
 to shut. I know that you have but little power,  
 and yet you have kept my word and have not

denied my name. <sup>9</sup>Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you. <sup>10</sup>Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. <sup>11</sup>I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. <sup>12</sup>The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. <sup>13</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

To the Church in Laodicea

<sup>14</sup>“And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation.

<sup>15</sup>“I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! <sup>16</sup>So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup>For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. <sup>18</sup>I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup>Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup>Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and

eat with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup>The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ ”

## Writing

But Christ says, “Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness” [Matt. 3:15]; as much as to say: The purpose of my baptism is to wash away and drown the sins of all the world, that through it all righteousness and salvation may be accomplished. Therefore baptism was instituted by God primarily for Christ’s sake and then afterwards also for the sake of all men. For first he must sanctify baptism through his own body and thereby take away the sin, in order that afterwards those who believe in him may have the forgiveness of sins. Therefore baptism is not a useless, empty thing, as the sectarians blasphemously say, but in it all righteousness is fulfilled.

Then repentance, as John preaches it for the forgiveness of sins, consists mostly in your acknowledging that God is right and confessing that his judgment is true when he says that we are all sinners and all condemned. When you do this from the heart, then repentance has begun. What more must I do then? Bow down and be baptized. For, says Christ, by my baptism I have accomplished it, that whoever believes in me and accepts this baptism receives the forgiveness of sins, and my Father and I and the Holy Spirit will dwell in him.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

I pass through trials all the way,  
 With sin and ills contending;  
 In patience I must bear each day  
 The cross of God's own sending.  
 When in adversity  
 I know not where to flee,  
 When storms of woe my soul dismay,  
 I pass through trials all the way.  
 —I Walk in Danger All the Way  
 (LSB 716:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, You sent Your angels to the churches of Asia Minor to announce to them either their fidelity to the Gospel or their departure from the true faith. May Your flock today hear the call of these angels to repent and believe in the Gospel, turn from their sins to the only true God, and show forth works of mercy and charity to those who are broken by the fallenness of this world; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1128)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 120–128

## 16 DECEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD  
 a | new song,\*  
 his praise in the assembly of the | godly!
- <sup>2</sup> Let Israel be glad in his | Maker;\*  
 let the children of Zion rejoice | in  
 their King!

- <sup>3</sup> Let them praise his name with | dancing,\*  
 making melody to him  
 with tambou- | rine and lyre!
- <sup>4</sup> For the LORD takes pleasure in his | people;\*  
 he adorns the humble with sal- | vation.
- <sup>5</sup> Let the godly exult in | glory;\*  
 let them sing for joy | on their beds.
- <sup>6</sup> Let the high praises of God be | in  
 their throats\*  
 and two-edged swords | in their hands,  
<sup>7</sup> to execute vengeance on the | nations\*  
 and punishments on the | peoples,  
<sup>8</sup> to bind their | kings with chains\*  
 and their nobles with fet- | ters of iron,  
<sup>9</sup> to execute on them the judgment | written!\*
- This is honor for all his godly  
 ones. | Praise the LORD!  
 —Psalm 149:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 61*

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 32:1–20

A King Will Reign in Righteousness

- <sup>1</sup> Behold, a king will reign in righteousness,  
 and princes will rule in justice.
- <sup>2</sup> Each will be like a hiding place  
 from the wind,  
 a shelter from the storm,  
 like streams of water in a dry place,  
 like the shade of a great rock  
 in a weary land.
- <sup>3</sup> Then the eyes of those who see  
 will not be closed,  
 and the ears of those who hear  
 will give attention.
- <sup>4</sup> The heart of the hasty will understand  
 and know,  
 and the tongue of the stammerers  
 will hasten to speak distinctly.
- <sup>5</sup> The fool will no more be called noble,  
 nor the scoundrel said to be honorable.

<sup>6</sup>For the fool speaks folly,  
and his heart is busy with iniquity,  
to practice ungodliness,  
to utter error concerning the LORD,  
to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied,  
and to deprive the thirsty of drink.

<sup>7</sup>As for the scoundrel—his devices are evil;  
he plans wicked schemes  
to ruin the poor with lying words,  
even when the plea of the needy is right.

<sup>8</sup>But he who is noble plans noble things,  
and on noble things he stands.

Complacent Women Warned of Disaster

<sup>9</sup>Rise up, you women who are at ease,  
hear my voice;  
you complacent daughters,  
give ear to my speech.

<sup>10</sup>In little more than a year  
you will shudder, you complacent women;  
for the grape harvest fails,  
the fruit harvest will not come.

<sup>11</sup>Tremble, you women who are at ease,  
shudder, you complacent ones;  
strip, and make yourselves bare,  
and tie sackcloth around your waist.

<sup>12</sup>Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields,  
for the fruitful vine,

<sup>13</sup>for the soil of my people  
growing up in thorns and briers,  
yes, for all the joyous houses  
in the exultant city.

<sup>14</sup>For the palace is forsaken,  
the populous city deserted;  
the hill and the watchtower  
will become dens forever,

a joy of wild donkeys,  
a pasture of flocks;

<sup>15</sup>until the Spirit is poured upon us  
from on high,

and the wilderness becomes  
a fruitful field,  
and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.

<sup>16</sup>Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,  
and righteousness abide  
in the fruitful field.

<sup>17</sup>And the effect of righteousness will be peace,  
and the result of righteousness,  
quietness and trust forever.

<sup>18</sup>My people will abide in a peaceful  
habitation,  
in secure dwellings,  
and in quiet resting places.

<sup>19</sup>And it will hail when the forest falls down,  
and the city will be utterly laid low.

<sup>20</sup>Happy are you who sow beside all waters,  
who let the feet of the ox  
and the donkey range free.

### **New Testament Reading: Revelation 4:1–11**

The Throne in Heaven

<sup>1</sup>After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

<sup>2</sup>At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. <sup>3</sup>And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. <sup>4</sup>Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. <sup>5</sup>From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the

seven spirits of God, <sup>6</sup>and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: <sup>7</sup>the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. <sup>8</sup>And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,  
who was and is and is to come!”

<sup>9</sup>And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup>the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

<sup>11</sup>“Worthy are you, our Lord and God,  
to receive glory and honor  
and power,  
for you created all things,  
and by your will they existed  
and were created.”

## Writing

Original sin is like a spiritual poison and leprosy, as Luther says [LW 7:233]. It has poisoned and corrupted the whole human nature. So we cannot show and point out to the eye, human nature by itself or original sin by itself. Nevertheless, there is the corrupt nature, or essence of the corrupt person (body and soul—the person himself) whom God has created. (Original sin dwells

in a person. It also corrupts the nature and essence of the entire person.) And there is original sin, which dwells in human nature or essence and corrupts it. They are not one and the same thing. For example, in outward leprosy the body that is leprous and the leprosy on or in the body are not one thing, properly speaking. But a distinction must also be maintained between our nature as created and preserved by God (in which sin is indwelling) and original sin (which dwells in the nature). These two things can, and must, be considered, taught, and believed separately according to Holy Scripture.

Furthermore, the chief articles of our Christian faith drive and compel us to preserve this distinction. For instance, in the article of creation, Scripture testifies that God has created human nature not only before the fall, but that it is God’s creature and work also since the fall. (See Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 45:11; 54:5; 64:8; Acts 17:25; Revelation 4:11.)

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord I 33–34

## Hymnody

The God who reigns on high  
The great archangels sing,  
And “Holy, holy, holy!” cry,  
“Almighty King!  
Who was and is the same  
And evermore shall be:  
Jehovah, Father, great I AM!  
We worship Thee!”

—The God of Abraham Praise  
(LSB 798:8)

## Prayer of the Day

Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created. Give us the faith to behold the majesty of Your presence in simple words, simple water, and simple bread and wine, as You come to us in the very body of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. (1129)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 129–140

## 17 DECEMBER

*Daniel the Prophet and the Three Young Men*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>I waited patiently | for the LORD;\*  
he inclined to me and | heard my cry.
- <sup>2</sup>He drew me up from the pit of destruction,  
out of the | miry bog,\*  
and set my feet upon a rock,  
making my | steps secure.
- <sup>3</sup>He put a new song in my mouth,  
a song of praise | to our God.\*  
Many will see and fear, and put their  
trust | in the LORD.
- <sup>4</sup>Blessèd is the man who makes  
the | LORD his trust,\*  
who does not turn to the proud,  
to those who go astray af- | ter a lie!
- <sup>5</sup>You have multiplied, O LORD my God,  
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts  
toward us; none can com- | pare with you!\*
- I will proclaim and tell of them,  
yet they are more than | can be told.

- <sup>16</sup>But may all who seek you rejoice  
and be | glad in you;\*  
may those who love your salvation say  
continually, “Great | is the LORD!”
- <sup>17</sup>As for me, I am poor and needy,  
but the Lord takes | thought for me.\*  
You are my help and my deliverer;  
do not delay, | O my God!  
—Psalm 40:1–5, 16–17

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 20*

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 33:1–24

O LORD, Be Gracious to Us

- <sup>1</sup>Ah, you destroyer,  
who yourself have not been destroyed,  
you traitor,  
whom none has betrayed!
- When you have ceased to destroy,  
you will be destroyed;  
and when you have finished betraying,  
they will betray you.
- <sup>2</sup>O LORD, be gracious to us; we wait for you.  
Be our arm every morning,  
our salvation in the time of trouble.
- <sup>3</sup>At the tumultuous noise peoples flee;  
when you lift yourself up,  
nations are scattered,
- <sup>4</sup>and your spoil is gathered  
as the caterpillar gathers;  
as locusts leap, it is leapt upon.
- <sup>5</sup>The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high;  
he will fill Zion with justice and  
righteousness,
- <sup>6</sup>and he will be the stability of your times,  
abundance of salvation, wisdom,  
and knowledge;  
the fear of the LORD is Zion’s treasure.
- <sup>7</sup>Behold, their heroes cry in the streets;  
the envoys of peace weep bitterly.

<sup>8</sup>The highways lie waste;  
the traveler ceases.

Covenants are broken;  
cities are despised;  
there is no regard for man.

<sup>9</sup>The land mourns and languishes;  
Lebanon is confounded  
and withers away;

Sharon is like a desert,  
and Bashan and Carmel  
shake off their leaves.

<sup>10</sup>“Now I will arise,” says the LORD,  
“now I will lift myself up;  
now I will be exalted.

<sup>11</sup>You conceive chaff; you give birth to stubble;  
your breath is a fire that  
will consume you.

<sup>12</sup>And the peoples will be as if burned to lime,  
like thorns cut down,  
that are burned in the fire.”

<sup>13</sup>Hear, you who are far off, what I have done;  
and you who are near,  
acknowledge my might.

<sup>14</sup>The sinners in Zion are afraid;  
trembling has seized the godless:

“Who among us can dwell with the  
consuming fire?  
Who among us can dwell with  
everlasting burnings?”

<sup>15</sup>He who walks righteously  
and speaks uprightly,  
who despises the gain of oppressions,  
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,  
who stops his ears from hearing  
of bloodshed  
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,

<sup>16</sup>he will dwell on the heights;  
his place of defense will be the fortresses  
of rocks;  
his bread will be given him;  
his water will be sure.

<sup>17</sup>Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty;  
they will see a land that stretches afar.

<sup>18</sup>Your heart will muse on the terror:  
“Where is he who counted, where is he  
who weighed the tribute?  
Where is he who counted the towers?”

<sup>19</sup>You will see no more the insolent people,  
the people of an obscure speech that you  
cannot comprehend,  
stammering in a tongue that  
you cannot understand.

<sup>20</sup>Behold Zion, the city of our appointed feasts!  
Your eyes will see Jerusalem,  
an untroubled habitation,  
an immovable tent,

whose stakes will never be plucked up,  
nor will any of its cords be broken.

<sup>21</sup>But there the LORD in majesty will be for us  
a place of broad rivers and streams,  
where no galley with oars can go,  
nor majestic ship can pass.

<sup>22</sup>For the LORD is our judge;  
the LORD is our lawgiver;  
the LORD is our king; he will save us.

<sup>23</sup>Your cords hang loose;  
they cannot hold the mast firm  
in its place  
or keep the sail spread out.

Then prey and spoil in abundance  
will be divided;  
even the lame will take the prey.

<sup>24</sup>And no inhabitant will say, “I am sick”;  
the people who dwell there will be  
forgiven their iniquity.

### **New Testament Reading: Revelation 5:1–14**

The Scroll and the Lamb

<sup>1</sup>Then I saw in the right hand of him who  
was seated on the throne a scroll written  
within and on the back, sealed with seven

seals. <sup>2</sup>And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” <sup>3</sup>And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, <sup>4</sup>and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. <sup>5</sup>And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

<sup>6</sup>And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup>And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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,  
<sup>10</sup>and you have made them a kingdom  
and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth.”

<sup>11</sup>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, <sup>12</sup>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!” <sup>13</sup>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!” <sup>14</sup>And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

### Writing

This is a prophecy that the king of Assyria would be defeated before Jerusalem and would retreat with shame, and the righteous would be saved, against all the hopes of the desperate hypocrites. And the prophet comforts them well, so that whoever keeps himself in God’s will and guards himself from sin shall be safe, as if he were on a high rock, and he shall have his bread and water, that is, his nourishment, even if everywhere else everything goes badly. He also promises the forgiveness of sins. And by doing so, he touches on the New Testament, in which the true enemy, the devil, shall be defeated, and the true Jerusalem, the Church, shall be made safe through Christ.

—Veit Dietrich

### Hymnody

Paschal Lamb, Your off’ring, finished  
Once for all when You were slain,  
In its fullness undiminished  
Shall forevermore remain,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
Cleansing souls from ev’ry stain;  
Cleansing souls from ev’ry stain.

—Lord, Enthroned in Heavenly  
Splendor (*LSB* 534:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, You rescued Daniel from the lions' den through the miraculous intervention of an angel. Save us now through the presence of Jesus, the Lion of Judah, who has conquered all our enemies through His blood and taken away all our sins as the Lamb of God, who now reigns from His heavenly throne with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1130)

## Daniel the Prophet and the Three Young Men

Daniel the prophet and the three young men—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—were among the leaders of the people of Judah who were taken into captivity in Babylon. Even in that foreign land, they remained faithful to the one true God in their piety, prayer, and life. On account of such steadfast faithfulness in the face of pagan idolatry, the three young men were thrown into a fiery furnace, from which they were saved by the Lord and emerged unharmed (Daniel 3). Similarly, Daniel was thrown into a pit of lions, from which he also was saved (Daniel 6). Blessed in all their endeavors by the Lord—and despite the hostility of some—Daniel and the three young men were promoted to positions of leadership among the Babylonians (Daniel 2:48–49; 3:30; 6:28). To Daniel in particular the Lord revealed the interpretation of dreams and signs that were given to King Nebuchadnezzar and King Belshazzar (Daniel 2, 4, 5). To Daniel himself, the Lord gave visions of the end times.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 141–149

## 18 DECEMBER

### Psalmody

- <sup>81</sup> My soul longs for your sal- | vation;\*  
I hope | in your word.
- <sup>82</sup> My eyes long for your | promise;\*  
I ask, “When will you | comfort me?”
- <sup>83</sup> For I have become like a wineskin | in  
the smoke,\*  
yet I have not forgotten your | statutes.
- <sup>84</sup> How long must your ser- | vant endure?\*
- When will you judge those who  
perse- | cute me?
- <sup>85</sup> The insolent have dug pit- | falls for me;\*
- they do not live according | to your law.
- <sup>86</sup> All your command- | ments are sure;\*
- they persecute me with  
falsehood; | help me!
- <sup>87</sup> They have almost made an end  
of me | on earth,\*  
but I have not forsaken your | precepts.
- <sup>88</sup> In your steadfast love | give me life,\*  
that I may keep the testimonies | of  
your mouth.
- Psalm 119:81–88

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 145*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 34:1–2, 8–35:10

Judgment on the Nations

- <sup>1</sup>Draw near, O nations, to hear,  
and give attention, O peoples!  
Let the earth hear, and all that fills it;  
the world, and all that comes from it.

<sup>2</sup>For the LORD is enraged against  
all the nations,  
and furious against all their host;  
he has devoted them to destruction,  
has given them over for slaughter. . . .

<sup>8</sup>For the LORD has a day of vengeance,  
a year of recompense  
for the cause of Zion.

<sup>9</sup>And the streams of Edom shall be turned  
into pitch,  
and her soil into sulfur;  
her land shall become burning pitch.

<sup>10</sup>Night and day it shall not be quenched;  
its smoke shall go up forever.

From generation to generation  
it shall lie waste;  
none shall pass through it forever  
and ever.

<sup>11</sup>But the hawk and the porcupine  
shall possess it,  
the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.  
He shall stretch the line of confusion over it,  
and the plumb line of emptiness.

<sup>12</sup>Its nobles—there is no one there to call  
it a kingdom,  
and all its princes shall be nothing.

<sup>13</sup>Thorns shall grow over its strongholds,  
nettles and thistles in its fortresses.  
It shall be the haunt of jackals,  
an abode for ostriches.

<sup>14</sup>And wild animals shall meet with hyenas;  
the wild goat shall cry to his fellow;  
indeed, there the night bird settles  
and finds for herself a resting place.

<sup>15</sup>There the owl nests and lays  
and hatches and gathers her young in her  
shadow;  
indeed, there the hawks are gathered,  
each one with her mate.

<sup>16</sup>Seek and read from the book of the LORD:  
Not one of these shall be missing;

none shall be without her mate.  
For the mouth of the LORD has commanded,  
and his Spirit has gathered them.

<sup>17</sup>He has cast the lot for them;  
his hand has portioned it out to them  
with the line;  
they shall possess it forever;  
from generation to generation they shall  
dwell in it.

The Ransomed Shall Return

<sup>35:1</sup>The wilderness and the dry land  
shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice  
and blossom like the crocus;  
<sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup>Say to those who have an anxious heart,  
“Be strong; fear not!  
Behold, your God  
will come with vengeance,  
with the recompense of God.  
He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
<sup>6</sup>then shall the lame man leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.  
For waters break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
<sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup>And a highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Way  
of Holiness;  
the unclean shall not pass over it.  
It shall belong to those who walk  
on the way;  
even if they are fools,  
they shall not go astray.

<sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast  
come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.

<sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain gladness and joy,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

*Additional Reading: Micah 1:1–7:20*

### **New Testament Reading: Revelation 6:1–17**

#### The Seven Seals

<sup>1</sup>Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” <sup>2</sup>And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

<sup>3</sup>When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” <sup>4</sup>And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

<sup>5</sup>When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its

rider had a pair of scales in his hand. <sup>6</sup>And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!”

<sup>7</sup>When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” <sup>8</sup>And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider’s name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

<sup>9</sup>When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. <sup>10</sup>They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” <sup>11</sup>Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

<sup>12</sup>When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, <sup>13</sup>and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. <sup>14</sup>The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. <sup>15</sup>Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup>calling to the mountains and

rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, <sup>17</sup>for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

### Writing

Our one Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man . . . was lifted up, [and] at the right hand of God He sits in that flesh which He assumed for us, and He will come in glory to judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end. . . .

When that has been accomplished, all the elect of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues shall be standing before the throne in the presence of the Lamb, clothed with white garments and with palms in their hands. They shall cry with a loud voice, “Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb.” Of them it is said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night within His temple; and He who sits upon the throne dwells above them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun shall not fall upon them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb, who is in the midst of throne, will direct them, and He will guide them to springs of living waters; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

—Agobard of Lyons

### Hymnody

Behold a host, arrayed in white,  
 Like thousand snow-clad mountains bright!  
 With palms they stand;  
 Who is this band  
 Before the throne of light?  
 These are the saints of glorious fame,  
 Who from the great affliction came  
 And in the flood  
 Of Jesus’ blood  
 Are cleansed from guilt and shame.  
 They now serve God both day and night;  
 They sing their songs in endless light.  
 Their anthems ring  
 As they all sing  
 With angels shining bright.

—Behold a Host, Arrayed in White  
 (LSB 676:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Merciful and everlasting God, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all to bear our sins on the cross. Grant that our hearts may be so fixed with steadfast faith in Him that we fear not the power of sin, death, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L31)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 150–157

## 19 DECEMBER

*Adam and Eve***Psalmody**

- <sup>11</sup> For as high as the heavens  
are a- | bove the earth,\*  
so great is his steadfast love toward those  
who | fear him;
- <sup>12</sup> as far as the east is | from the west,\*  
so far does he remove  
our transgres- | sions from us.
- <sup>13</sup> As a father shows compassion  
to his | children,\*  
so the LORD shows compassion  
to those who | fear him.
- <sup>14</sup> For he | knows our frame;\*  
he remembers that | we are dust.
- <sup>15</sup> As for man, his days | are like grass,\*  
he flourishes like a flower | of the field;
- <sup>16</sup> for the wind passes over it, and | it is gone,\*  
and its place knows | it no more.
- <sup>17</sup> But the steadfast love of the LORD is from  
everlasting to everlasting  
on those who | fear him,\*  
and his righteousness  
to children's | children,
- <sup>18</sup> to those who keep his | covenant\*  
and remember to do  
his com- | mandments.  
—Psalm 103:11–18

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 19***Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 40:1–17**

Comfort for God's People

- <sup>1</sup> Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.  
<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that her warfare is ended,

that her iniquity is pardoned,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way  
of the LORD;  
make straight in the desert a highway  
for our God.

<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill  
be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

The Word of God Stands Forever

<sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry!"  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass,  
and all its beauty is like the flower  
of the field.

<sup>7</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades  
when the breath of the Lord blows on it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades,  
but the word of our God  
will stand forever.

The Greatness of God

<sup>9</sup> Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good news;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;  
lift it up, fear not;

say to the cities of Judah,  
"Behold your God!"

<sup>10</sup> Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
behold, his reward is with him,

and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>He will tend his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms;  
he will carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead those that are with young.

<sup>12</sup>Who has measured the waters  
in the hollow of his hand  
and marked off the heavens with a span,  
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure  
and weighed the mountains in scales  
and the hills in a balance?

<sup>13</sup>Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD,  
or what man shows him his counsel?

<sup>14</sup>Whom did he consult,  
and who made him understand?

Who taught him the path of justice,  
and taught him knowledge,  
and showed him the way  
of understanding?

<sup>15</sup>Behold, the nations are like a drop  
from a bucket,  
and are accounted as the dust  
on the scales;  
behold, he takes up the coastlands  
like fine dust.

<sup>16</sup>Lebanon would not suffice for fuel,  
nor are its beasts enough  
for a burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup>All the nations are as nothing before him,  
they are accounted by him as less than  
nothing and emptiness.

### **New Testament Reading: Revelation 7:1–17**

The 144,000 of Israel Sealed

<sup>1</sup>After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. <sup>2</sup>Then I saw another angel ascending

from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, <sup>3</sup>saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” <sup>4</sup>And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

<sup>5</sup>12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed,  
12,000 from the tribe of Reuben,  
12,000 from the tribe of Gad,  
<sup>6</sup>12,000 from the tribe of Asher,  
12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali,  
12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,  
<sup>7</sup>12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,  
12,000 from the tribe of Levi,  
12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,  
<sup>8</sup>12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun,  
12,000 from the tribe of Joseph,  
12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.

A Great Multitude from Every Nation

<sup>9</sup>After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup>and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” <sup>11</sup>And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup>saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

<sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” <sup>14</sup>I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup>“Therefore they are before the throne of God,

and serve him day and night in his temple;

and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

<sup>16</sup>They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;

the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.

<sup>17</sup>For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,

and he will guide them to springs of living water,

and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

## Writing

In the midst of paradise stands the tree of life. From this, Adam [and Eve were] driven away so that [they] would not eat of it but instead would die according to God’s judgment on account of the sin [they] committed. But the cross of Christ is the noble tree of life on which hangs the noble fruits that bring us eternal life. “No forest produces such foliage, blossoms, sprouts.” Whoever consoles himself with the precious merit of Jesus Christ shall live, even though he die. “And whoever lives and believes in Him shall never die” (John 11:26). Because of their sins, Adam [and Eve and their] children

were locked out of paradise, but through the key of the holy cross, it will be opened once again to all repentant Christians. *Crux Christi clavis Paradisi*, that is, “The cross of Christ is the key of paradise,” says John of Damascus. To this, the fathers of the Church relate the key of the house of David, which can open so that no one can shut [Isaiah 22:22]. Let all evil spirits be defied, who would like to lock heaven to us, which the Lord Jesus opened by His cross and death.

—Valerius Herberger

## Hymnody

Glory be to Him who loved us,  
Washed us from each spot and stain;

Glory be to Him who bought us,  
Made us kings with Him to reign!

Glory, glory

To the Lamb that once was slain!

—Glory Be to God the Father

(LSB 506:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, You created Adam in your image and gave him Eve as his helpmate, and after their fall into sin, You promised them a Savior who would crush the devil’s might. By Your mercy, number us among those who have come out of the great tribulation with the seal of the living God on our foreheads and whose robes have been made white in the blood of the Lamb; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1131)

## Adam and Eve

Adam was the first man, made in the image of God and given dominion over all the earth (Genesis 1:26). Eve was the first woman, formed from one of Adam’s ribs

to be his companion and helper (Genesis 2:18–24). God placed them in the Garden of Eden to take care of creation as His representatives. But they forsook God’s Word and plunged the world into sin (Genesis 3:1–7). For this disobedience, God drove them from the garden. Eve would suffer pain in childbirth and would chafe at her subjection to Adam; Adam would toil amid thorns and thistles and return to the dust of the ground. Yet God promised that the woman’s Seed would crush the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:8–24). Sin had entered God’s perfect creation and changed it until God would restore it again through Christ. Eve is the mother of the human race, while Adam is representative of all humanity and the fall, as the apostle Paul writes, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Large Catechism I 158–166

**20 DECEMBER**

*Katharina von Bora Luther*

**Psalmody**

<sup>25</sup> My soul clings | to the dust;\*  
give me life according | to your word!

<sup>26</sup> When I told of my ways,  
you | answered me;\*  
teach me your | statutes!

<sup>27</sup> Make me understand the way  
of your | precepts,\*  
and I will meditate on your | wondrous  
works.

<sup>28</sup> My soul melts away for | sorrow;\*  
strengthen me according | to your word!

<sup>29</sup> Put false ways | far from me\*  
and graciously teach | me your law!

<sup>30</sup> I have chosen the way of | faithfulness;\*  
I set your just decrees be- | fore me.

<sup>31</sup> I cling to your testimonies, | O LORD;\*  
let me not be | put to shame!

<sup>32</sup> I will run in the way  
of your com- | mandments\*  
when you en- | large my heart!  
—Psalm 119:25–32

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 141*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Isaiah 40:18–41:10**

[The Greatness of God]

<sup>18</sup>To whom then will you liken God,  
or what likeness compare with him?

<sup>19</sup>An idol! A craftsman casts it,  
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold  
and casts for it silver chains.

<sup>20</sup>He who is too impoverished for an offering  
chooses wood that will not rot;

he seeks out a skillful craftsman  
to set up an idol that will not move.

<sup>21</sup>Do you not know? Do you not hear?  
Has it not been told you  
from the beginning?  
Have you not understood  
from the foundations of the earth?

<sup>22</sup>It is he who sits above the circle  
of the earth,  
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;  
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,  
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;

<sup>23</sup>who brings princes to nothing,  
and makes the rulers of the earth as  
emptiness.

<sup>24</sup>Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,  
scarcely has their stem taken root  
in the earth,

when he blows on them, and they wither,  
and the tempest carries them off  
like stubble.

<sup>25</sup>To whom then will you compare me,  
that I should be like him?  
says the Holy One.

<sup>26</sup>Lift up your eyes on high and see:  
who created these?

He who brings out their host by number,  
calling them all by name,  
by the greatness of his might,  
and because he is strong in power  
not one is missing.

<sup>27</sup>Why do you say, O Jacob,  
and speak, O Israel,

“My way is hidden from the LORD,  
and my right is disregarded by my God”?

<sup>28</sup>Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.

<sup>29</sup>He gives power to the faint,  
and to him who has no might he  
increases strength.

<sup>30</sup>Even youths shall faint and be weary,  
and young men shall fall exhausted;

<sup>31</sup>but they who wait for the LORD shall renew  
their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings  
like eagles;

they shall run and not be weary;  
they shall walk and not faint.

Fear Not, For I Am with You

<sup>41:1</sup>Listen to me in silence,  
O coastlands;

let the peoples renew their strength;

let them approach, then let them speak;  
let us together draw near for judgment.

<sup>2</sup>Who stirred up one from the east  
whom victory meets at every step?

He gives up nations before him,  
so that he tramples kings underfoot;

he makes them like dust with his sword,  
like driven stubble with his bow.

<sup>3</sup>He pursues them and passes on safely,  
by paths his feet have not trod.

<sup>4</sup>Who has performed and done this,  
calling the generations from the  
beginning?

I, the LORD, the first,  
and with the last; I am he.

<sup>5</sup>The coastlands have seen and are afraid;  
the ends of the earth tremble;  
they have drawn near and come.

<sup>6</sup>Everyone helps his neighbor  
and says to his brother, “Be strong!”

<sup>7</sup>The craftsman strengthens the goldsmith,  
and he who smooths with the hammer  
him who strikes the anvil,

saying of the soldering, “It is good”;  
and they strengthen it with nails  
so that it cannot be moved.

<sup>8</sup>But you, Israel, my servant,  
Jacob, whom I have chosen,  
the offspring of Abraham, my friend;

<sup>9</sup>you whom I took from the ends of the earth,  
and called from its farthest corners,  
saying to you, “You are my servant,  
I have chosen you and not cast you off”;

<sup>10</sup>fear not, for I am with you;  
be not dismayed, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my righteous  
right hand.

## New Testament Reading: Revelation 8:1–13

The Seventh Seal and the Golden Censer

<sup>1</sup>When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. <sup>2</sup>Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. <sup>3</sup>And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, <sup>4</sup>and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. <sup>5</sup>Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

The Seven Trumpets

<sup>6</sup>Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

<sup>7</sup>The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

<sup>8</sup>The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. <sup>9</sup>A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

<sup>10</sup>The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. <sup>11</sup>The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

<sup>12</sup>The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

<sup>13</sup>Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!”

## Writing

Most holy Ms. Doctor, We thank you very kindly for your great concern that kept you awake. For from the day you [started] worrying about us, a fire right outside of our quarters’ door was eager to consume us, and on the strength of your worry, a stone almost fell on my head and could have squashed me like in a mousetrap. In our private chamber chalk and lime had been raining down for nearly two days until we hired some people who touched the stone with two fingers, causing it to fall down. It was as big as a long pillow and as wide as two hands. That one intended to thank you for your holy concern, if the dear holy angels had not been on guard. I am concerned that if you do not stop worrying, the earth might swallow us up at the end and all the elements pursuing us. Is that the way you learned the catechism and the faith? Pray, and let God take care of you. As it says in Psalm 55 and other places, “Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you.”

—From a letter from Martin Luther to his wife:

I would not trade my Kate for France and Venice for three reasons: (1) Because God has given her to me and me to her. (2) I

have seen, time and again, that other women have more faults than my Kate. (3) She is a faithful marriage partner; she is loyal and has integrity.

The Letter to the Galatians is my beloved epistle; I trust it. It is my Kate von Bora. . . .

To have grace and peace in marriage is a gift second only to the knowledge of the Gospel. . . . Kate, you have a god-fearing man who loves you. You are an empress; realize it and thank God for it.

—From Martin Luther’s *Table Talk*

### Hymnody

At whose dread name, majestic now,  
All knees must bend, all hearts must bow;  
All things celestial Thee shall own,  
And things terrestrial, Lord alone.

—Creator of the Stars of Night  
(LSB 351:4)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, our refuge and our strength, You raised up Your servant Katharina to support her husband in the task to reform and renew your Church in the light of Your Word. Defend and purify the Church today and grant that, through faith, we may boldly support and encourage our pastors and teachers of the faith as they and proclaim and administer the riches of Your grace made known in Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1132)

### Katharina von Bora Luther

Katharina von Bora (1499–1552) was placed in a convent while still a child and became a nun in 1515. In April 1523, she

and eight other nuns were rescued from the convent and brought to Wittenberg. There Martin Luther helped return some of the women to their former homes and placed the rest in good families. Katharina and Martin were married on June 13, 1525. Their marriage was a happy one and was blessed with six children. Katharina skillfully managed the Luther household, which always seemed to grow because of the reformer’s generous hospitality. After Luther’s death in 1546, Katharina remained in Wittenberg but lived much of the time in poverty. She died as the result of injuries she received in an accident while traveling with her children to Torgau in order to escape the plague.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 167–178

## 21 DECEMBER

*St. Thomas, Apostle*

### Psalmody

<sup>24</sup> “O my God,” I say, “take me not away  
in the midst | of my days—\*  
you whose years endure throughout  
all gener- | ations!”

<sup>25</sup> Of old you laid the foundation | of the  
earth,\*  
and the heavens are the work | of your  
hands.

<sup>26</sup> They will perish, but you | will remain;\*  
they will all wear out like a | garment.

You will change them like a robe,  
and they will | pass away,\*

<sup>27</sup> but you are the same,  
and your years | have no end.

<sup>28</sup>The children of your servants  
shall | dwell secure;\*  
their offspring shall be established  
be- | fore you.

—Psalm 102:24–28

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 102*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 42:1–25

The LORD'S Chosen Servant

<sup>1</sup>Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;

I have put my Spirit upon him;  
he will bring forth justice to the nations.

<sup>2</sup>He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,  
or make it heard in the street;

<sup>3</sup>a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a faintly burning wick he will not  
quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

<sup>4</sup>He will not grow faint or be discouraged  
till he has established justice in the earth;  
and the coastlands wait for his law.

<sup>5</sup>Thus says God, the LORD,  
who created the heavens  
and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth  
and what comes from it,

who gives breath to the people on it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:

<sup>6</sup>“I am the LORD; I have called you  
in righteousness;  
I will take you by the hand and keep you;

I will give you as a covenant for the people,  
a light for the nations,

<sup>7</sup>to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit  
in darkness.

<sup>8</sup>I am the LORD; that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to carved idols.

<sup>9</sup>Behold, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth  
I tell you of them.”

Sing to the Lord a New Song

<sup>10</sup>Sing to the LORD a new song,  
his praise from the end of the earth,  
you who go down to the sea,  
and all that fills it,  
the coastlands and their inhabitants.

<sup>11</sup>Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice,  
the villages that Kedar inhabits;  
let the habitants of Sela sing for joy,  
let them shout from the top  
of the mountains.

<sup>12</sup>Let them give glory to the LORD,  
and declare his praise in the coastlands.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD goes out like a mighty man,  
like a man of war he stirs up his zeal;  
he cries out, he shouts aloud,  
he shows himself mighty against his foes.

<sup>14</sup>For a long time I have held my peace;  
I have kept still and restrained myself;  
now I will cry out like a woman in labor;  
I will gasp and pant.

<sup>15</sup>I will lay waste mountains and hills,  
and dry up all their vegetation;  
I will turn the rivers into islands,  
and dry up the pools.

<sup>16</sup>And I will lead the blind  
in a way that they do not know,  
in paths that they have not known  
I will guide them.

I will turn the darkness before them into light,  
the rough places into level ground.

These are the things I do,  
and I do not forsake them.

<sup>17</sup>They are turned back and utterly put  
to shame,

who trust in carved idols,

who say to metal images,

“You are our gods.”

Israel’s Failure to Hear and See

<sup>18</sup>Hear, you deaf,

and look, you blind, that you may see!

<sup>19</sup>Who is blind but my servant,

or deaf as my messenger whom I send?

Who is blind as my dedicated one,

or blind as the servant of the LORD?

<sup>20</sup>He sees many things,

but does not observe them;

his ears are open, but he does not hear.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD was pleased, for his

righteousness’ sake,

to magnify his law and make it glorious.

<sup>22</sup>But this is a people plundered and looted;

they are all of them trapped in holes

and hidden in prisons;

they have become plunder

with none to rescue,

spoil with none to say, “Restore!”

<sup>23</sup>Who among you will give ear to this,

will attend and listen

for the time to come?

<sup>24</sup>Who gave up Jacob to the looter,

and Israel to the plunderers?

Was it not the LORD, against whom

we have sinned,

in whose ways they would not walk,

and whose law they would not obey?

<sup>25</sup>So he poured on him the heat of his anger

and the might of battle;

it set him on fire all around,

but he did not understand;

it burned him up,

but he did not take it to heart.

## New Testament Reading:

### Revelation 9:1–12

[The Seven Trumpets]

<sup>1</sup>And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. <sup>2</sup>He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. <sup>3</sup>Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. <sup>4</sup>They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. <sup>6</sup>And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

<sup>7</sup>In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, <sup>8</sup>their hair like women’s hair, and their teeth like lions’ teeth; <sup>9</sup>they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. <sup>10</sup>They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. <sup>11</sup>They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

<sup>12</sup>The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.

## Writing

I would certainly like to praise music with all my heart as the excellent gift of God which it is and to commend it to everyone. . . . Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. She is a mistress and governess of those human emotions—to pass over the animals—which as masters govern men or more often overwhelm them. No greater commendation than this can be found—at least not by us. For whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate—and who could number all these masters of the human heart, namely, the emotions, inclinations, and affections that impel men to evil or good?—what more effective means than music could you find? The Holy Ghost himself honors her as an instrument for his proper work when in his Holy Scriptures he asserts that through her his gifts were instilled in the prophets, namely, the inclination to all virtues, as can be seen in Elisha [I Kings 3:15]. On the other hand, she serves to cast out Satan, the instigator of all sins, as is shown in Saul, the king of Israel [I Sam. 16:23].

Thus it was not without reason that the fathers and prophets wanted nothing else to be associated as closely with the Word of God as music. Therefore, we have so many hymns and Psalms where message and music join to move the listener's soul, while in other living beings and [sounding] bodies music remains a language without words. After all, the gift of language combined with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God with both word and music, namely, by proclaiming [the Word of God] through music and by providing sweet melodies with words.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

The King shall come when morning dawns  
And light triumphant breaks,  
When beauty gilds the eastern hills  
And life to joy awakes.

—The King Shall Come When  
Morning Dawns (*LSB* 348:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, You strengthened Your apostle Thomas with firm and certain faith in the resurrection of Your Son. Grant us such faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, that we may never be found wanting in Your sight; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F02)

## St. Thomas, Apostle

All four Gospels mention St. Thomas as one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. John's Gospel, which names him "the Twin," uses Thomas's questions to reveal truths about Jesus. It is Thomas who says, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" To this question Jesus replies, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:5–6). John's Gospel also tells how Thomas, on the evening of the day of Jesus' resurrection, doubts the report of the disciples that they had seen Jesus. Later, "doubting Thomas" becomes "believing Thomas" when he confesses Jesus as "my Lord and my God" (John 20:24–29). According to tradition, Thomas traveled eastward after Pentecost, eventually reaching India, where still today a group of people call themselves "Christians of St. Thomas." Thomas was martyred for the faith by being speared to death.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 179–188

### 22 DECEMBER

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>Not to us, O LORD, not to us,  
but to your name give | glory,\*  
for the sake of your steadfast love  
and your | faithfulness!
- <sup>2</sup>Why should the | nations say,\*  
“Where | is their God?”
- <sup>3</sup>Our God is in the | heavens;\*  
he does all that he | pleases.
- <sup>4</sup>Their idols are sil- | ver and gold,\*  
the work of | human hands.
- <sup>5</sup>They have mouths, but | do not speak;\*  
eyes, but | do not see.
- <sup>6</sup>They have ears, but | do not hear;\*  
noses, but | do not smell.
- <sup>7</sup>They have hands, but do not feel; feet,  
but | do not walk;\*  
and they do not make a sound | in  
their throat.
- <sup>8</sup>Those who make them be- | come  
like them;\*  
so do all who | trust in them.
- <sup>11</sup>You who fear the LORD,  
trust | in the LORD!\*
- He is their help | and their shield.  
—Psalm 115:1–8, 11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 125*

#### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 43:1–24

Israel's Only Savior

- <sup>1</sup>But now thus says the LORD,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.

<sup>2</sup>When you pass through the waters,  
I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not  
overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire  
you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.

<sup>3</sup>For I am the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom,  
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.

<sup>4</sup>Because you are precious in my eyes,  
and honored, and I love you,

I give men in return for you,  
peoples in exchange for your life.

<sup>5</sup>Fear not, for I am with you;  
I will bring your offspring from the east,  
and from the west I will gather you.

<sup>6</sup>I will say to the north, Give up,  
and to the south, Do not withhold;

bring my sons from afar  
and my daughters from the end  
of the earth,

<sup>7</sup>everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made.”

<sup>8</sup>Bring out the people who are blind,  
yet have eyes,  
who are deaf, yet have ears!

<sup>9</sup>All the nations gather together,  
and the peoples assemble.

Who among them can declare this,  
and show us the former things?

Let them bring their witnesses  
to prove them right,  
and let them hear and say, It is true.

<sup>10</sup>“You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD,  
“and my servant whom I have chosen,

that you may know and believe me  
and understand that I am he.

Before me no god was formed,  
nor shall there be any after me.

<sup>11</sup>I, I am the LORD,  
and besides me there is no savior.

<sup>12</sup>I declared and saved and proclaimed,  
when there was no strange god  
among you;  
and you are my witnesses,” declares the  
LORD, “and I am God.

<sup>13</sup>Also henceforth I am he;  
there is none who can deliver  
from my hand;  
I work, and who can turn it back?”

<sup>14</sup>Thus says the LORD,  
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:  
“For your sake I send to Babylon  
and bring them all down as fugitives,  
even the Chaldeans, in the ships  
in which they rejoice.

<sup>15</sup>I am the LORD, your Holy One,  
the Creator of Israel, your King.”

<sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD,  
who makes a way in the sea,  
a path in the mighty waters,

<sup>17</sup>who brings forth chariot and horse,  
army and warrior;

they lie down, they cannot rise,  
they are extinguished, quenched like a  
wick:

<sup>18</sup>“Remember not the former things,  
nor consider the things of old.

<sup>19</sup>Behold, I am doing a new thing;  
now it springs forth,  
do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.

<sup>20</sup>The wild beasts will honor me,  
the jackals and the ostriches,

for I give water in the wilderness,  
rivers in the desert,

to give drink to my chosen people,  
<sup>21</sup>the people whom I formed for myself  
that they might declare my praise.

<sup>22</sup>“Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob;  
but you have been weary of me, O Israel!

<sup>23</sup>You have not brought me your sheep  
for burnt offerings,  
or honored me with your sacrifices.

I have not burdened you with offerings,  
or wearied you with frankincense.

<sup>24</sup>You have not bought me sweet cane  
with money,  
or satisfied me with the fat  
of your sacrifices.

But you have burdened me with your sins;  
you have wearied me  
with your iniquities.”

### New Testament Reading: Revelation 9:13–10:11

[The Seven Trumpets]

<sup>13</sup>Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet,  
and I heard a voice from the four horns of  
the golden altar before God, <sup>14</sup>saying to the  
sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release  
the four angels who are bound at the great  
river Euphrates.” <sup>15</sup>So the four angels, who  
had been prepared for the hour, the day, the  
month, and the year, were released to kill a  
third of mankind. <sup>16</sup>The number of mounted  
troops was twice ten thousand times ten  
thousand; I heard their number. <sup>17</sup>And this is  
how I saw the horses in my vision and those  
who rode them: they wore breastplates the  
color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur,  
and the heads of the horses were like lions’  
heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came  
out of their mouths. <sup>18</sup>By these three plagues  
a third of mankind was killed, by the fire

and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. <sup>19</sup>For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound.

<sup>20</sup>The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, <sup>21</sup>nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

#### The Angel and the Little Scroll

<sup>10:1</sup>Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. <sup>2</sup>He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, <sup>3</sup>and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. <sup>4</sup>And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." <sup>5</sup>And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven <sup>6</sup>and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, <sup>7</sup>but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

<sup>8</sup>Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel

who is standing on the sea and on the land."

<sup>9</sup>So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." <sup>10</sup>And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. <sup>11</sup>And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

#### Writing

Heavenly love is also noticeably strengthened by the eternal vision of the divine essence. "We will see Him," John says, "as He is" [1 John 3:2]. Similarly, Christ prays, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, [to see My glory]" [John 17:24]. He also says of the angels, "Their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" [Matthew 18:10]. And David says, "When shall I come, that I may see the face of God?" [Psalm 42:2]; "I shall behold Your face in righteousness" [Psalm 17:15], "for with You is the fountain of life; in Your light do we see the light" [Psalm 36:9].

Now since God is love itself and reveals His essence in heaven visibly, so that angels and men behold His face, what do they behold and see in God with their pure eyes besides pure love? And what is the majestic brightness of the divine essence other than pure flames of love and brightness of love, which with great joy shines out and gives light to all the citizens of heaven? What could give joy and life to the children of God more than the dear vision of this most beloved essence?

If there is a beautiful human face on earth that can draw the eyes of many people to itself like a magnet attracts iron, and if the vision of trusted friends—parents and children, husband, wife, groom and bride—is so lovely and pleasant that it gives joy to the heart, though human beings are not love itself but only have loving tendencies toward their friends: how many hundred thousand times dearer and lovelier must the beautiful essence of God be, who is love itself, and the bright, uncovered face of our heavenly Father and of His only-begotten Son, our most-beautiful and most-friendly bridegroom Jesus Christ, as well as of the Holy Spirit in eternal life!

—Philipp Nicolai

### Hymnody

God of the prophets, bless the prophets' sons;  
Elijah's mantle o'er Elisha cast.

Each age its solemn task may claim but once;  
Make each one nobler, stronger than the last.

—God of the Prophets, Bless the  
Prophets' Sons (*LSB* 682:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Grant us so firmly to believe in Your Son Jesus that our faith may never be found wanting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B85)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 189–198

## 23 DECEMBER

### Psalmody

<sup>4</sup>“O LORD, make me know my end and what is the measure | of my days,\*  
let me know how fleeting | I am!

<sup>5</sup>Behold, you have made my days  
a few | handbreadths,\*  
and my lifetime is as nothing  
be- | fore you.

Surely all mankind stands as a | mere breath!\*

<sup>6</sup>Surely a man goes about as a | shadow!

Surely for nothing they are in | turmoil,\*  
man heaps up wealth and  
does not know who will | gather!

<sup>7</sup>“And now, O Lord, for what | do I wait?\*

My hope | is in you.

<sup>8</sup>Deliver me from all my trans- | gressions.\*  
Do not make me the scorn | of the fool!

—Psalm 39:4–8

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 144*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 43:25–44:20

[Israel's Only Savior]

<sup>25</sup>“I, I am he  
who blots out your transgressions  
for my own sake,  
and I will not remember your sins.

<sup>26</sup>Put me in remembrance;  
let us argue together;  
set forth your case,  
that you may be proved right.

<sup>27</sup>Your first father sinned,  
and your mediators transgressed  
against me.

<sup>28</sup>Therefore I will profane the princes  
of the sanctuary,  
and deliver Jacob to utter destruction  
and Israel to reviling.

## Israel the Lord's Chosen

<sup>44:1</sup>“But now hear, O Jacob my servant,  
Israel whom I have chosen!

<sup>2</sup>Thus says the LORD who made you,  
who formed you from the womb  
and will help you:

Fear not, O Jacob my servant,  
Jeshurun whom I have chosen.

<sup>3</sup>For I will pour water on the thirsty land,  
and streams on the dry ground;  
I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring,  
and my blessing on your descendants.

<sup>4</sup>They shall spring up among the grass  
like willows by flowing streams.

<sup>5</sup>This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’s,’  
another will call on the name  
of Jacob,  
and another will write on his hand,  
‘The LORD’s,’  
and name himself  
by the name of Israel.”

## Besides Me There Is No God

<sup>6</sup>Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel  
and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:  
“I am the first and I am the last;  
besides me there is no god.

<sup>7</sup>Who is like me? Let him proclaim it.  
Let him declare and set it before me,  
since I appointed an ancient people.  
Let them declare what is to come,  
and what will happen.

<sup>8</sup>Fear not, nor be afraid;  
have I not told you from of old and  
declared it?

And you are my witnesses!  
Is there a God besides me?  
There is no Rock; I know not any.”

## The Folly of Idolatry

<sup>9</sup>All who fashion idols are nothing, and  
the things they delight in do not profit. Their

witnesses neither see nor know, that they  
may be put to shame. <sup>10</sup>Who fashions a god  
or casts an idol that is profitable for nothing?

<sup>11</sup>Behold, all his companions shall be put to  
shame, and the craftsmen are only human.  
Let them all assemble, let them stand forth.  
They shall be terrified; they shall be put to  
shame together.

<sup>12</sup>The ironsmith takes a cutting tool  
and works it over the coals. He fashions it  
with hammers and works it with his strong  
arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength  
fails; he drinks no water and is faint. <sup>13</sup>The  
carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out  
with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and  
marks it with a compass. He shapes it into  
the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man,  
to dwell in a house. <sup>14</sup>He cuts down cedars, or  
he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets  
it grow strong among the trees of the forest.  
He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it.

<sup>15</sup>Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes  
a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a  
fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god  
and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls  
down before it. <sup>16</sup>Half of it he burns in the  
fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it  
and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and  
says, “Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!”  
<sup>17</sup>And the rest of it he makes into a god, his  
idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He  
prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are  
my god!”

<sup>18</sup>They know not, nor do they discern,  
for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot  
see, and their hearts, so that they cannot  
understand. <sup>19</sup>No one considers, nor is there  
knowledge or discernment to say, “Half of  
it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on  
its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And  
shall I make the rest of it an abomination?

Shall I fall down before a block of wood?"

<sup>20</sup>He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

### **New Testament Reading: Revelation 11:1–19**

#### The Two Witnesses

<sup>1</sup>Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, <sup>2</sup>but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. <sup>3</sup>And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

<sup>4</sup>These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. <sup>5</sup>And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. <sup>6</sup>They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. <sup>7</sup>And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, <sup>8</sup>and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. <sup>9</sup>For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in

a tomb, <sup>10</sup>and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. <sup>11</sup>But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. <sup>12</sup>Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. <sup>13</sup>And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

<sup>14</sup>The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

#### The Seventh Trumpet

<sup>15</sup>Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." <sup>16</sup>And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup>saying,

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,

who is and who was,  
for you have taken your great power  
and begun to reign.

<sup>18</sup>The nations raged,  
but your wrath came,  
and the time for the dead to be  
judged,  
and for rewarding your servants, the  
prophets and saints,  
and those who fear your name,

both small and great,  
and for destroying the destroyers of the  
earth.”

<sup>19</sup>Then God’s temple in heaven was  
opened, and the ark of his covenant was  
seen within his temple. There were flashes of  
lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an  
earthquake, and heavy hail.

### Writing

The Church celebrates the triple advent  
(or “coming”) of Christ. First is the advent  
into flesh, which is despised and humble  
before the world, of which Zechariah 9[:9]  
says, “Behold, Your King comes to you, gentle  
and poor, sitting upon a donkey, on a colt,  
the foal of a beast of burden,” [cf.] Matthew  
21[:5]. The second is the spiritual advent,  
which happens daily into the minds of the  
righteous, since He is present constantly with  
the Church, hears her, helps and consoles her,  
concerning which Christ said, John 14[:18]:  
“I will not leave you orphans, but will come  
to you.” Again, [v. 23:] “If anyone loves Me,  
We will come to him and make Our dwelling  
with him.” The third advent of Christ is His  
glorious return to judgment, concerning  
which Isaiah 3[:14] says, “The Lord will come  
into judgment.” And Matthew 24[:30] says,  
“And they will see the Son of Man coming  
on the clouds of heaven, with much power  
and majesty.” It is useful always to consider  
these three advents of the Son of God—into

flesh, the minds of the righteous, and for  
the last judgment—and to have them set  
forth in the Church for stirring up faith in  
minds, invocation, and the fear of God or  
repentance. St. Augustine says thus on Luke,  
“This time is called the Advent of the Lord  
for good reason: so that every believer will  
prepare himself and mend his ways, so that  
he may have strength worthily to celebrate  
the nativity of his God.”

—Lucas Lossius

### Hymnody

Jesus shall reign where’er the sun  
Does its successive journeys run;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

—Jesus Shall Reign (*LSB* 832:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, Your divine wisdom sets in order  
all things in heaven and on earth. Put away  
from us all things hurtful and give us those  
things that are beneficial for us; through  
Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives  
and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one  
God, now and forever. (B82)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 199–210

## CHRISTMAS SEASON

*Proper for the Nativity of Our Lord and the Christmas Season for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.*

### The Nativity of Our Lord—Christmas Eve

24 DECEMBER

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Oh sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done | marvelous things!\*  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have worked salva- | tion for him.
- <sup>2</sup> The LORD has made known his sal- | vation,\*  
he has revealed his righteousness in the  
sight of the | nations.
- <sup>3</sup> He 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.
- <sup>4</sup> Make a joyful noise to the LORD, | all  
the earth;\*  
break forth into joyous song  
and sing | praises!
- <sup>5</sup> Sing praises to the LORD | with the lyre,\*  
with the lyre and the sound of | melody!
- <sup>6</sup> With trumpets and the sound | of the horn\*  
make a joyful noise before the | King,  
the LORD!
- <sup>9</sup> He will judge the world with | righteousness,\*  
and the peoples with | equity.  
—Psalm 98:1–6, 9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 2*

#### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 44:21–45:13, 20–25

The LORD Redeems Israel

- <sup>21</sup> Remember these things, O Jacob,  
and Israel, for you are my servant;

I formed you; you are my servant;  
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.

<sup>22</sup> I have blotted out your transgressions  
like a cloud

and your sins like mist;

return to me, for I have redeemed you.

<sup>23</sup> Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it;  
shout, O depths of the earth;

break forth into singing, O mountains,  
O forest, and every tree in it!

For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,  
and will be glorified in Israel.

<sup>24</sup> Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,  
who formed you from the womb:

“I am the LORD, who made all things,  
who alone stretched out the heavens,  
who spread out the earth by myself,

<sup>25</sup> who frustrates the signs of liars  
and makes fools of diviners,

who turns wise men back  
and makes their knowledge foolish,

<sup>26</sup> who confirms the word of his servant  
and fulfills the counsel of his messengers,

who says of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be inhabited,’  
and of the cities of Judah,

‘They shall be built,  
and I will raise up their ruins’;

<sup>27</sup> who says to the deep, ‘Be dry;  
I will dry up your rivers’;

<sup>28</sup> who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd,  
and he shall fulfill all my purpose’;

saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’  
and of the temple,  
‘Your foundation shall be laid.’ ”

Cyrus, God's Instrument

<sup>45:1</sup>Thus says the LORD to his anointed,  
to Cyrus,

whose right hand I have grasped,  
to subdue nations before him  
and to loose the belts of kings,

to open doors before him  
that gates may not be closed:

<sup>2</sup>"I will go before you  
and level the exalted places,

I will break in pieces the doors of bronze  
and cut through the bars of iron,

<sup>3</sup>I will give you the treasures of darkness  
and the hoards in secret places,

that you may know that it is I, the LORD,  
the God of Israel, who call you by your  
name.

<sup>4</sup>For the sake of my servant Jacob,  
and Israel my chosen,

I call you by your name,  
I name you, though you do not know me.

<sup>5</sup>I am the LORD, and there is no other,  
besides me there is no God;  
I equip you, though you do not know me,

<sup>6</sup>that people may know,  
from the rising of the sun  
and from the west,  
that there is none besides me;  
I am the LORD, and there is no other.

<sup>7</sup>I form light and create darkness,  
I make well-being and create calamity,  
I am the LORD, who does all these things.

<sup>8</sup>"Shower, O heavens, from above,  
and let the clouds rain down  
righteousness;

let the earth open, that salvation and  
righteousness may bear fruit;  
let the earth cause them both to sprout;

I the LORD have created it.

<sup>9</sup>"Woe to him who strives with him  
who formed him,  
a pot among earthen pots!

Does the clay say to him who forms it,  
'What are you making?'  
or 'Your work has no handles'?

<sup>10</sup>Woe to him who says to a father,  
'What are you begetting?'  
or to a woman,  
'With what are you in labor?'"

<sup>11</sup>Thus says the LORD,  
the Holy One of Israel,  
and the one who formed him:

"Ask me of things to come;  
will you command me concerning  
my children and the work of my hands?"

<sup>12</sup>I made the earth  
and created man on it;  
it was my hands that stretched  
out the heavens,  
and I commanded all their host.

<sup>13</sup>I have stirred him up in righteousness,  
and I will make all his ways level;  
he shall build my city  
and set my exiles free,  
not for price or reward,"  
says the LORD of hosts. . . .

[The Lord, the Only Savior]

<sup>20</sup>"Assemble yourselves and come;  
draw near together,  
you survivors of the nations!

They have no knowledge  
who carry about their wooden idols,  
and keep on praying to a god  
that cannot save.

<sup>21</sup>Declare and present your case;  
let them take counsel together!

Who told this long ago?

Who declared it of old?

Was it not I, the LORD?

And there is no other god besides me,  
a righteous God and a Savior;  
there is none besides me.

<sup>22</sup>“Turn to me and be saved,  
all the ends of the earth!

For I am God, and there is no other.

<sup>23</sup>By myself I have sworn;  
from my mouth has gone out in  
righteousness  
a word that shall not return:

‘To me every knee shall bow,  
every tongue shall swear allegiance.’

<sup>24</sup>“Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me,  
are righteousness and strength;

to him shall come and be ashamed  
all who were incensed against him.

<sup>25</sup>In the LORD all the offspring of Israel  
shall be justified and shall glory.”

*Additional Reading: Daniel 10:1–12:13*

*Additional Reading: Isaiah 48:1–22*

### **New Testament Reading: Revelation 12:1–17**

The Woman and the Dragon

<sup>1</sup>And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup>She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. <sup>3</sup>And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. <sup>4</sup>His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the

woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. <sup>5</sup>She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, <sup>6</sup>and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

Satan Thrown Down to Earth

<sup>7</sup>Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, <sup>8</sup>but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup>And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. <sup>10</sup>And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. <sup>11</sup>And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. <sup>12</sup>Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

<sup>13</sup>And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. <sup>14</sup>But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. <sup>15</sup>The serpent

poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. <sup>16</sup>But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. <sup>17</sup>Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

## Writing

O Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Deliver your servants by Your glorious return [Titus 2:13]! The pope and his followers are done for. They will have none of You. Help us who are poor and needy, who sigh to You, and who pray to You earnestly [Romans 8:23, 26], according to the grace You have given us through Your Holy Spirit [Romans 12:3, 6], who lives and reigns with You and the Father, blessed forever. Amen.

The First Part: The Awe-Inspiring Articles on the Divine Majesty

1. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons in one divine essence and nature [Matthew 28:19], are one God, who has created heaven and earth [1 Corinthians 8:6].

2. The Father is begotten of no one; the Son is begotten of the Father [John 1:14]; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son [John 15:26].

3. Neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit, but the Son became man [John 1:14].

4. The Son became man in this manner: He was conceived, without the cooperation of man, by the Holy Spirit [Luke 1:34–35], and was born of the pure, holy Virgin Mary. Afterward, He suffered, died, was buried, descended to hell, rose from the dead [1

Corinthians 15:3–4], ascended to heaven [Acts 1:9–11], sits at the right hand of God [Acts 2:33], will come to judge the quick and the dead, and so on, as the Apostles' and Athanasian Creeds and our children's catechism teach.

— Smalcald Articles Preface  
and the First Part

## Hymnody

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The rose I have in mind;  
With Mary we behold it,  
The virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright,  
She bore to us a Savior,  
When half-spent was the night.

—Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming  
(*LSB* 359:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L05)

## The Nativity of Our Lord

The exact date of the birth of Jesus is not known, and during the earliest centuries of the Church it seemed to have little significance. This followed the Early Church's tradition of honoring and celebrating a Christian's death as his or her birth date into eternity and the ongoing presence of Jesus. Likewise the life, work, death, and

resurrection of Christ was of much greater importance to early Christians than the earthly details of His life. The earliest Church feast, Epiphany (January 6), celebrated both the birth and Baptism of Christ. However, in the fourth century great Christological controversies that questioned Christ's divinity and humanity raced throughout Christianity. By AD 336, December 25 had been established in Rome as the celebration of Christ's birth, a festival welcomed particularly by orthodox Christians in the West. From Rome, Christ's natal festival spread throughout the Western Church. In Eastern traditions of the Church, Epiphany remains the principal celebration of the birth of Jesus.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 211–221

### The Nativity of Our Lord—Christmas Day

**25 DECEMBER**

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Oh sing to the LORD a | new song;\*  
sing to the LORD, | all the earth!
- <sup>2</sup> Sing to the LORD, | bless his name;\*  
tell of his salvation from | day to day.
- <sup>3</sup> Declare his glory among the | nations,\*  
his marvelous works  
among all the | peoples!
- <sup>4</sup> For great is the LORD,  
and greatly | to be praised;\*  
he is to be feared a- | bove all gods.

<sup>5</sup> For all the gods of the peoples  
are worthless | idols,\*  
but the LORD made the | heavens.

<sup>11</sup> Let the heavens be glad,  
and let the | earth rejoice;\*  
let the sea roar, and all that fills it; <sup>12</sup> let  
the field exult, and every- | thing in it!

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for  
joy <sup>13</sup> before the LORD, | for he comes,\*  
for he comes to | judge the earth.

He will judge the world in | righteousness,\*  
and the peoples in his | faithfulness.

—Psalm 96:1–5, 11–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 150*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 49:1–18

The Servant of the Lord

<sup>1</sup> Listen to me, O coastlands,  
and give attention, you peoples from afar.

The LORD called me from the womb,  
from the body of my mother  
he named my name.

<sup>2</sup> He made my mouth like a sharp sword;  
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;  
he made me a polished arrow;  
in his quiver he hid me away.

<sup>3</sup> And he said to me, “You are my servant,  
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

<sup>4</sup> But I said, “I have labored in vain;  
I have spent my strength  
for nothing and vanity;  
yet surely my right is with the Lord,  
and my recompense with my God.”

<sup>5</sup> And now the LORD says,  
he who formed me from the womb  
to be his servant,  
to bring Jacob back to him;  
and that Israel might be gathered  
to him—

for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD,  
and my God has become my strength—

<sup>6</sup>he says:

“It is too light a thing that you  
should be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;

I will make you as a light for the nations,  
that my salvation may reach  
to the end of the earth.”

<sup>7</sup>Thus says the LORD,  
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,

to one deeply despised,  
abhorred by the nation,

the servant of rulers:

“Kings shall see and arise;  
princes, and they shall prostrate  
themselves;

because of the LORD, who is faithful,  
the Holy One of Israel,  
who has chosen you.”

The Restoration of Israel

<sup>8</sup>Thus says the LORD:

“In a time of favor I have answered you;  
in a day of salvation I have helped you;

I will keep you and give you  
as a covenant to the people,

to establish the land,  
to apportion the desolate heritages,

<sup>9</sup>saying to the prisoners, ‘Come out,’  
to those who are in darkness, ‘Appear.’

They shall feed along the ways;  
on all bare heights shall be their pasture;

<sup>10</sup>they shall not hunger or thirst,  
neither scorching wind nor sun shall  
strike them,

for he who has pity on them will lead them,  
and by springs of water will guide them.

<sup>11</sup>And I will make all my mountains a road,  
and my highways shall be raised up.

<sup>12</sup>Behold, these shall come from afar,  
and behold, these from the north and  
from the west,  
and these from the land of Syene.”

<sup>13</sup>Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;  
break forth, O mountains, into singing!

For the LORD has comforted his people  
and will have compassion on his  
afflicted.

<sup>14</sup>But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me;  
my Lord has forgotten me.”

<sup>15</sup>“Can a woman forget her nursing child,  
that she should have no compassion on  
the son of her womb?

Even these may forget,  
yet I will not forget you.

<sup>16</sup>Behold, I have engraved you  
on the palms of my hands;  
your walls are continually before me.

<sup>17</sup>Your builders make haste;  
your destroyers and those who laid  
you waste go out from you.

<sup>18</sup>Lift up your eyes around and see;  
they all gather, they come to you.

As I live, declares the LORD,  
you shall put them all on  
as an ornament;  
you shall bind them on as a bride does.

### **New Testament Reading: Matthew 1:1–17**

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

<sup>1</sup>The book of the genealogy of Jesus  
Christ, the son of David, the son of  
Abraham.

<sup>2</sup>Abraham was the father of Isaac, and  
Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father  
of Judah and his brothers, <sup>3</sup>and Judah the  
father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and  
Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron  
the father of Ram, <sup>4</sup>and Ram the father of  
Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of

Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon,<sup>5</sup> and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,<sup>6</sup> and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,<sup>7</sup> and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph,<sup>8</sup> and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah,<sup>9</sup> and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,<sup>10</sup> and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah,<sup>11</sup> and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

<sup>12</sup>And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,<sup>13</sup> and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor,<sup>14</sup> and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud,<sup>15</sup> and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob,<sup>16</sup> and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

<sup>17</sup>So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

## Writing

Man was ensnared by the assault of the archfiend and broke his Creator's command, and was stripped of grace and put off his

confidence with God, and covered himself with the harshness of a toilsome life (for this is the meaning of the fig leaves). He was clothed about with death, that is, mortality and the grossness of flesh (for this is what the garment of skins signifies) and was banished from Paradise by God's just judgment, and condemned to death, and made subject to corruption. Yet in His pity, God, who gave man his being and who in His graciousness bestowed on him a life of happiness, did not disregard man. . . . For it was sin that brought death like a wild and savage beast into the world to the ruin of the human life. [But the Redeemer was] without sin and not made liable through sin to death. . . . For the very Creator and Lord Himself undertakes a struggle on behalf of the work of His own hands. . . . And since the enemy snares man by the hope of Godhead, he himself is snared in turn by the screen of flesh, and thus the goodness and wisdom, the justice and might of God are revealed. God's goodness is revealed in that He did not disregard the frailty of His own handiwork. He was moved with compassion for him in his fall and stretched forth His hand to him so that in the exercise of His justice, when man was overcome, the tyrant would not have another victory. God did not snatch man by might from death, but in His goodness and justice He made him, who had become the slave of death through his sins, once more a conqueror. God rescued man, like by like—most difficult though it seemed—and His wisdom is seen in His devising the most fitting solution of the difficulty. For by the good pleasure of our God and Father, the only-begotten Son and Word of God and God . . . bent the heavens and descended to earth. . . . What greater thing is there, than

that God should become man? And the Word became flesh without being changed, of the Holy Spirit, and Mary the holy and ever-virgin one, the mother of God. And He acts as mediator between God and man, He, the only lover of man, conceived in the Virgin's chaste womb without will or desire or any connection with man or pleasurable generation, but through the Holy Spirit and the first offspring of Adam. And He, who is like us, becomes obedient to the Father and finds a remedy for our disobedience in what He had assumed from us, and became a pattern of obedience to us without which it is not possible to obtain salvation.

—John of Damascus

### Hymnody

What Adam lost, none could reclaim,  
And Paradise was barred  
Until the second Adam came  
To mend what sin had marred.  
For when the time was full and right  
God sent His only Son;  
He came to us as life and light  
And our redemption won.

—O Sing of Christ (*LSB* 362:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Most merciful God, You gave Your eternal Word to become incarnate of the pure Virgin. Grant Your people grace to put away fleshly lusts, that they may be ready for Your visitation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L07)

### The Nativity of Our Lord

Advent prepared us for the coming of the Savior, the fulfillment of the promise first

made in the Garden of Eden in response to the sin of Adam and Eve. Christmas is the day we celebrate that hope fulfilled. Jesus is the only hope of the world, because Jesus is the only one who could set us free from our sins. The commemoration of the Nativity of Our Lord puts before us once again the story of the long-awaited King who left His heavenly throne to enter time and become human like one of us. When God wanted to save you from your sins, He did not send a prophet or even an angel: He sent His own Son into human flesh just like ours.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 222–233

## 26 DECEMBER

*St. Stephen, Martyr*

### Psalmody

- <sup>4</sup> I sought the LORD, and he | answered me\*  
and delivered me from | all my fears.
- <sup>5</sup> Those who look to him are | radiant,\*  
and their faces shall never | be ashamed.
- <sup>6</sup> This poor man cried,  
and the LORD | heard him\*  
and saved him out of all his | troubles.
- <sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD encamps around  
those who | fear him,\*  
and de- | livers them.
- <sup>8</sup> Oh, taste and see that the | LORD is good!\*  
Blessèd is the man who  
takes ref- | uge in him!
- <sup>9</sup> Oh, fear the LORD, | you his saints,\*  
for those who fear him | have no lack!

<sup>10</sup>The young lions suffer want and | hunger;\*  
but those who seek the LORD  
lack | no good thing.

<sup>19</sup>Many are the afflictions of the | righteous,\*  
but the LORD delivers him  
out | of them all.

—Psalm 34:4–10, 19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 60*

### Old Testament Reading:

Isaiah 49:22–26; 50:4–51:8, 12–16

[The Restoration of Israel]

<sup>22</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD:

“Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations,  
and raise my signal to the peoples;  
and they shall bring your sons in their bosom,  
and your daughters shall be carried on  
their shoulders.

<sup>23</sup>Kings shall be your foster fathers,  
and their queens your nursing mothers.

With their faces to the ground  
they shall bow down to you,  
and lick the dust of your feet.

Then you will know that I am the LORD;  
those who wait for me  
shall not be put to shame.”

<sup>24</sup>Can the prey be taken from the mighty,  
or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?

<sup>25</sup>For thus says the LORD:

“Even the captives of the mighty  
shall be taken,  
and the prey of the tyrant be rescued,

for I will contend with those  
who contend with you,  
and I will save your children.

<sup>26</sup>I will make your oppressors  
eat their own flesh,  
and they shall be drunk  
with their own blood as with wine.

Then all flesh shall know  
that I am the LORD your Savior,  
and your Redeemer,  
the Mighty One of Jacob.” . . .

[Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience]

<sup>4</sup>The Lord GOD has given me  
the tongue of those who are taught,  
that I may know how to sustain with a word  
him who is weary.

Morning by morning he awakens;  
he awakens my ear  
to hear as those who are taught.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious;  
I turned not backward.

<sup>6</sup>I gave my back to those who strike,  
and my cheeks to those  
who pull out the beard;

I hid not my face  
from disgrace and spitting.

<sup>7</sup>But the Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like a flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put  
to shame.

<sup>8</sup>He who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.

Who is my adversary?  
Let him come near to me.

<sup>9</sup>Behold, the Lord GOD helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

Behold, all of them will wear out  
like a garment;  
the moth will eat them up.

<sup>10</sup>Who among you fears the LORD  
and obeys the voice of his servant?

Let him who walks in darkness  
and has no light

trust in the name of the LORD  
and rely on his God.

<sup>11</sup>Behold, all you who kindle a fire,  
who equip yourselves  
with burning torches!

Walk by the light of your fire,  
and by the torches that you have kindled!

This you have from my hand:  
you shall lie down in torment.

The LORD'S Comfort for Zion

<sup>51:14</sup>Listen to me, you who pursue  
righteousness,  
you who seek the LORD:

look to the rock from which you were hewn,  
and to the quarry from which you  
were dug.

<sup>2</sup>Look to Abraham your father  
and to Sarah who bore you;  
for he was but one when I called him,  
that I might bless him and multiply him.

<sup>3</sup>For the LORD comforts Zion;  
he comforts all her waste places  
and makes her wilderness like Eden,  
her desert like the garden of the Lord;  
joy and gladness will be found in her,  
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

<sup>4</sup>Give attention to me, my people,  
and give ear to me, my nation;  
for a law will go out from me,  
and I will set my justice  
for a light to the peoples.

<sup>5</sup>My righteousness draws near,  
my salvation has gone out,  
and my arms will judge the peoples;  
the coastlands hope for me,  
and for my arm they wait.

<sup>6</sup>Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
and look at the earth beneath;  
for the heavens vanish like smoke,  
the earth will wear out like a garment,

and they who dwell in it will die  
in like manner;

but my salvation will be forever,  
and my righteousness will never  
be dismayed.

<sup>7</sup>Listen to me, you who know righteousness,  
the people in whose heart is my law;  
fear not the reproach of man,  
nor be dismayed at their revilings.

<sup>8</sup>For the moth will eat them up like a garment,  
and the worm will eat them like wool;  
but my righteousness will be forever,  
and my salvation to all generations." . . .

<sup>12</sup>"I, I am he who comforts you;  
who are you that you are afraid  
of man who dies,  
of the son of man who is made like grass,

<sup>13</sup>and have forgotten the LORD, your Maker,  
who stretched out the heavens  
and laid the foundations of the earth,  
and you fear continually all the day  
because of the wrath of the oppressor,  
when he sets himself to destroy?

And where is the wrath of the oppressor?

<sup>14</sup>He who is bowed down shall  
speedily be released;  
he shall not die and go down to the pit,  
neither shall his bread be lacking.

<sup>15</sup>I am the LORD your God,  
who stirs up the sea  
so that its waves roar—  
the LORD of hosts is his name.

<sup>16</sup>And I have put my words in your mouth  
and covered you in the shadow  
of my hand,  
establishing the heavens  
and laying the foundations of the earth,  
and saying to Zion, 'You are my people.' "

**New Testament Reading:**  
**Matthew 1:18–25**

The Birth of Jesus Christ

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup>“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name  
Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup>but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

**Writing**

Reverent hearts, it is an old, laudable custom to commemorate St. Stephen on the second day of Christmas. For just as the innocent children were the first martyrs after Christ’s birth, so also St. Stephen was the first after Christ’s ascension to praise our glorious King Jesus with his blood. Our predecessors used to say, *Heri natus est Christus in mundo, ut hodie Stephanus nasceretur in coelo.* “Yesterday Christ was born in the world, so

that today Stephen would be born in heaven.” This is speaking rightly and truly of the fruit of Jesus Christ’s birth. If the Christ Child had not been born, the entire world would be lost. Thus Stephen’s sleep in death and entrance through the open heaven to the glory of God in eternal life will show us well what great usefulness and goodness we have from the incarnation and birth of the Child Jesus.

*Stephen* means a “garland” or a “crown.” Think here of our beautiful Christmas consolation. Whoever believes in the name of Jesus is righteous before God and can expect a glorious crown. Devout Christians are “virgins” before God (Matthew 25:1; Revelation 14:4) and have four different virgin garlands. The first is the garland of righteousness gifted. Second is the garland of righteousness begun. The third is the garland of all kinds of cross and thorns. The fourth is the glorious garland of perfect righteousness.

The ancient teachers of the Church say that the Lord Jesus loved Stephen in life, in death, and after death. First, in life, for He filled him with His Spirit, with heavenly wisdom, and faith unfeigned. Second, in death, for He offered him heaven opened and waited for his soul. Third, after death, for He gave him the garland of glory and set up for him a famous commemoration until the Last Day. These are the beautiful flowers of Christmas. Those who truly love our glorious King Jesus Christ shall be certain of God’s grace in life, in death, and after death. They shall not die, but live, and proclaim the work of the Lord.

—Valerius Herberger

## Hymnody

Jesus! Name of priceless worth  
To the fallen of the earth  
For the promise that it gave,  
“Jesus shall His people save.”

—Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love  
(LSB 900:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, in the midst of our sufferings for the sake of Christ grant us grace to follow the example of the first martyr, Stephen, that we also may look to the One who suffered and was crucified on our behalf and pray for those who do us wrong; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F03)

## St. Stephen, Martyr

St. Stephen, “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5), was one of the Church’s first seven deacons. He was appointed by the Church leaders to distribute food and other necessities to the poor in the growing Christian community in Jerusalem, thereby giving the apostles more time for their public ministry of proclamation (Acts 6:2–5). He and the other deacons apparently were expected not only to wait on tables but also to teach and preach. When some of his colleagues became jealous of him, they brought Stephen to the Sanhedrin and falsely charged him with blaspheming against Moses (Acts 6:9–14). Stephen’s confession of faith, along with his rebuke of the members of the Sanhedrin for rejecting their Messiah and being responsible for His death, so infuriated them that they dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death. Stephen is

honored as the Church’s first martyr and for his words of commendation and forgiveness as he lay dying: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” and “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:59–60).

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 234–244

## 27 DECEMBER

*St. John, Apostle and Evangelist*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Give the king your justice, | O God,\*  
and your righteousness to the | royal son!
- <sup>4</sup> May he defend the cause of the poor  
of the people, give deliverance  
to the children of the | needy,\*  
and crush the op- | pressor!
- <sup>10</sup> May the kings of Tarshish  
and of the coastlands render him | tribute,\*  
may the kings of Sheba  
and Seba | bring gifts!
- <sup>11</sup> May all kings fall down be- | fore him,\*  
all nations | serve him!
- <sup>12</sup> For he delivers the needy | when he calls,\*  
the poor and him who has no | helper.
- <sup>13</sup> He has pity on the weak and the | needy,\*  
and saves the lives of the | needy.
- <sup>14</sup> From oppression and violence  
he re- | deems their life,\*  
and precious is their blood | in his sight.
- <sup>15</sup> Long may he live; may gold of Sheba  
be giv- | en to him!\*
- May prayer be made for him continually,  
and blessings invoked  
for him | all the day!

<sup>18</sup>Blessèd be the LORD, the God of | Israel,\*  
who alone does | wondrous things.

<sup>19</sup>Blessèd be his glorious name for- | ever;\*  
may the whole earth be filled  
with his glory! Amen and | Amen!  
—Psalm 72:1, 4, 10–15, 18–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 92*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Isaiah 51:17–52:12**

[The LORD's Comfort for Zion]

<sup>17</sup>Wake yourself, wake yourself,  
stand up, O Jerusalem,  
you who have drunk from the hand  
of the LORD

the cup of his wrath,  
who have drunk to the dregs  
the bowl, the cup of staggering.

<sup>18</sup>There is none to guide her  
among all the sons she has borne;  
there is none to take her by the hand  
among all the sons  
she has brought up.

<sup>19</sup>These two things have happened  
to you—

who will console you?—  
devastation and destruction,  
famine and sword;

who will comfort you?

<sup>20</sup>Your sons have fainted;  
they lie at the head of every street  
like an antelope in a net;  
they are full of the wrath of the Lord,  
the rebuke of your God.

<sup>21</sup>Therefore hear this, you who are  
afflicted,  
who are drunk, but not with wine:

<sup>22</sup>Thus says your Lord, the LORD,  
your God who pleads the cause  
of his people:

“Behold, I have taken from your hand  
the cup of staggering;  
the bowl of my wrath  
you shall drink no more;  
<sup>23</sup>and I will put it into the hand  
of your tormentors,  
who have said to you,  
‘Bow down, that we may pass over’;  
and you have made your back  
like the ground  
and like the street for them  
to pass over.”

The LORD's Coming Salvation

<sup>52:1</sup>Awake, awake,  
put on your strength, O Zion;  
put on your beautiful garments,  
O Jerusalem, the holy city;  
for there shall no more come into you  
the uncircumcised and the unclean.  
<sup>2</sup>Shake yourself from the dust and arise;  
be seated, O Jerusalem;  
loose the bonds from your neck,  
O captive daughter of Zion.

<sup>3</sup>For thus says the LORD: “You were sold  
for nothing, and you shall be redeemed  
without money.” <sup>4</sup>For thus says the Lord  
GOD: “My people went down at the first into  
Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian  
oppressed them for nothing. <sup>5</sup>Now therefore  
what have I here,” declares the LORD, “seeing  
that my people are taken away for nothing?  
Their rulers wail,” declares the LORD, “and  
continually all the day my name is despised.  
<sup>6</sup>Therefore my people shall know my name.  
Therefore in that day they shall know that it is  
I who speak; here am I.”

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of him  
who brings good news,

who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,  
 who publishes salvation,  
 who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

<sup>8</sup>The voice of your watchmen—  
 they lift up their voice;  
 together they sing for joy;  
 for eye to eye they see  
 the return of the LORD to Zion.

<sup>9</sup>Break forth together into singing,  
 you waste places of Jerusalem,  
 for the LORD has comforted his people;  
 he has redeemed Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD has bared his holy arm  
 before the eyes of all the nations,  
 and all the ends of the earth shall see  
 the salvation of our God.

<sup>11</sup>Depart, depart, go out from there;  
 touch no unclean thing;  
 go out from the midst of her;  
 purify yourselves,  
 you who bear the vessels of the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>For you shall not go out in haste,  
 and you shall not go in flight,  
 for the LORD will go before you,  
 and the God of Israel  
 will be your rear guard.

## New Testament Reading: Matthew 2:1–12

### The Visit of the Wise Men

<sup>1</sup>Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup>When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told

him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

“ ‘And you, O Bethlehem,  
 in the land of Judah,  
 are by no means least among  
 the rulers of Judah;  
 for from you shall come a ruler  
 who will shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” <sup>9</sup>After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup>And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

## Writing

Give no opportunity to the heathen, lest the godly many be blasphemed because of the foolish few. For, “woe to him through whose foolishness My name is blasphemed among any people” [cf. Isaiah 52:5]. Therefore, be deaf whenever someone speaks to you apart from Jesus Christ, who is of the line of David, who is of Mary, who was truly born, both ate and drank, truly suffered under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died, while those in heaven and on the earth and under

the earth witnessed it; who also truly was raised from the dead, His Father having raised Him; this one, His Father, will in the same way, in Christ Jesus, raise us who believe in Him, without whom we do not have true life.

But if, as certain atheists, that is, unbelievers, say He only appeared to suffer—they themselves only appear to be!—why am I a prisoner? Why indeed do I pray to fight with the beasts? If so, I would be dying for no reason—what’s more I would then be lying about the Lord.

Therefore, flee the evil offshoots that bear deadly fruit; if someone tastes it, he dies immediately. For these are not the planting of the Father. For if they were, they would show themselves to be branches of the cross, and their fruit would be incorruptible; through the cross, by His suffering, He called you to be His members, since the head is not able to be born without members.

—Ignatius of Antioch

### Hymnody

Whom the sages  
 And the ages  
 Eagerly awaited,  
 Angels proudly  
 Herald loudly  
 In their songs elated.  
 Let us, too, in these days,  
 Thankful hearts gladly raise;  
 To the tender  
 Infant render  
 All our praise,  
 To the tender  
 Infant render  
 All our praise.

—Let Our Gladness Banish Sadness  
 (LSB 371:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Merciful Lord, cast the bright beams of Your light upon Your Church that we, being instructed in the doctrine of Your blessed apostle and evangelist John, may come to the light of everlasting life; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F04)

### St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

St. John was a son of Zebedee and brother of James the Elder (whose festival day is July 25). John was among the first disciples to be called by Jesus (Matthew 4:18–22) and became known as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” as he refers to himself in the Gospel that bears his name (e.g., John 21:20). Of the Twelve, John alone did not forsake Jesus in the hours of His suffering and death. With the faithful women, he stood at the cross, where our Lord made him the guardian of His mother. After Pentecost, John spent his ministry in Jerusalem and at Ephesus, where tradition says he was bishop. He wrote the fourth Gospel, the three Epistles that bear his name, and the Book of Revelation. Especially memorable in his Gospel are the account of the wedding at Cana (John 2:1–12), the “Gospel in a nutshell” (John 3:16), Jesus’ saying about the Good Shepherd (John 10:11–16), the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11), and Jesus’ encounter with Mary Magdalene on Easter morning (John 20:11–18). According to tradition, John was banished to the island of Patmos (off the coast of Asia Minor) by the Roman emperor Domitian. John lived to a very old age, surviving all the apostles, and died at Ephesus around AD 100.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 245–253

### 28 DECEMBER

#### Psalmody

- <sup>11</sup> Sing praises to the LORD,  
who sits enthroned in | Zion!\*
- Tell among the peoples | his deeds!
- <sup>12</sup> For he who avenges blood is mind- | ful  
of them;\*
- he does not forget the cry  
of the af- | flicted.
- <sup>13</sup> Be gracious to me, | O LORD!\*
- See my affliction from those who hate me,  
O you who lift me up from the | gates  
of death,
- <sup>14</sup> that I may recount all your | praises,\*  
that in the gates of the daughter of Zion  
I may rejoice in your sal- | vation.  
—Psalm 9:11–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 31*

#### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 52:13–54:10

He Was Wounded for Our Transgressions

- <sup>13</sup> Behold, my servant shall act wisely;  
he shall be high and lifted up,  
and shall be exalted.
- <sup>14</sup> As many were astonished at you—  
his appearance was so marred, beyond  
human semblance,  
and his form beyond that of the children  
of mankind—
- <sup>15</sup> so shall he sprinkle many nations;  
kings shall shut their mouths  
because of him;

for that which has not been told them they see,  
and that which they have not heard  
they understand.

<sup>53:1</sup> Who has believed what he has heard  
from us?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD  
been revealed?

<sup>2</sup> For he grew up before him like a young  
plant,

and like a root out of dry ground;

he had no form or majesty  
that we should look at him,

and no beauty that we should desire him.

<sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by men;  
a man of sorrows,  
and acquainted with grief;

and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised,  
and we esteemed him not.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement  
that brought us peace,  
and with his stripes we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—  
to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers  
is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.

<sup>8</sup>By oppression and judgment  
he was taken away;  
and as for his generation, who considered  
that he was cut off out of the land  
of the living,  
stricken for the transgression  
of my people?

<sup>9</sup>And they made his grave with the wicked  
and with a rich man in his death,  
although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

<sup>10</sup>Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;  
he has put him to grief;  
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,  
he shall see his offspring;  
he shall prolong his days;  
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

<sup>11</sup>Out of the anguish of his soul  
he shall see and be satisfied;  
by his knowledge shall the righteous one,  
my servant,  
make many to be accounted righteous,  
and he shall bear their iniquities.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore I will divide him a portion  
with the many,  
and he shall divide the spoil  
with the strong,

because he poured out his soul to death  
and was numbered with the  
transgressors;  
yet he bore the sin of many,  
and makes intercession for the  
transgressors.

The Eternal Covenant of Peace

<sup>54:1</sup>“Sing, O barren one, who did not bear;  
break forth into singing and cry aloud,  
you who have not been in labor!  
For the children of the desolate one  
will be more  
than the children of her who is married,”  
says the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>“Enlarge the place of your tent,  
and let the curtains of your habitations  
be stretched out;

do not hold back; lengthen your cords  
and strengthen your stakes.

<sup>3</sup>For you will spread abroad to the right  
and to the left,  
and your offspring will possess  
the nations  
and will people the desolate cities.

<sup>4</sup>“Fear not, for you will not be ashamed;  
be not confounded, for you will not  
be disgraced;

for you will forget the shame of your youth,  
and the reproach of your widowhood you  
will remember no more.

<sup>5</sup>For your Maker is your husband,  
the LORD of hosts is his name;  
and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer,  
the God of the whole earth he is called.

<sup>6</sup>For the LORD has called you  
like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit,  
like a wife of youth when she is cast off,  
says your God.

<sup>7</sup>For a brief moment I deserted you,  
but with great compassion  
I will gather you.

<sup>8</sup>In overflowing anger for a moment  
I hid my face from you,  
but with everlasting love I will have  
compassion on you,”  
says the LORD, your Redeemer.

<sup>9</sup>“This is like the days of Noah to me:  
as I swore that the waters of Noah  
should no more go over the earth,  
so I have sworn that I will not be angry  
with you,  
and will not rebuke you.

<sup>10</sup>For the mountains may depart  
and the hills be removed,

but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,  
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,”  
says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 2:13–23

#### The Flight to Egypt

<sup>13</sup>Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” <sup>14</sup>And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt <sup>15</sup>and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

#### Herod Kills the Children

<sup>16</sup>Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. <sup>17</sup>Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup>“A voice was heard in Ramah,  
weeping and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be comforted, because  
they are no more.”

#### The Return to Nazareth

<sup>19</sup>But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup>saying, “Rise, take the child and his

mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” <sup>21</sup>And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup>But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup>And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

### Writing

We resist evil with the ministry of Word and sword, and yet, the evils which cannot be averted we bear to our great advantage but to their detriment and destruction.

In regard to this line of thought there is also a celebrated dictum of Gregory: “The ungodly do good to us by doing evil.” And Augustine says of the infants slain by Herod that an enemy with his whole strength and all the resources of his kingdom could not have benefited the children more than by killing them.

Accordingly, God humbles those who are His to exalt them; He kills them to make them alive; He confounds them to glorify them; He makes them subject to raise them up.

When I am about to depart from this life, I support myself with this consolation that I believe in God’s Son. And yet I am buried; I am eaten by worms; I am consumed by the most foul rottenness, as Job says (Job 17:14): “I said to the rottenness, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worms, ‘My mother,’ or ‘My sister.’” Here I do not discern God’s plan, that although I die and rot away, I must at some time be revived. But God has promised

and said (cf. John 14:19): “You will live, for I live, and you will live. I am the Lord your God!” How? In eternal life and with a more beautiful and brighter body than the body of the sun. At present I do not see or feel this, but I believe it and suffer this very short delay. For this life has already been prepared, and in the meantime the crown of the kingdom and glory is being prepared “which the Lord will give me on that Day, the righteous Judge,” as Paul says (2 Tim. 4:8), “and not only to me, but also to those who love His coming.”

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Sweet flow’rets of the martyr band,  
Plucked by the tyrant’s ruthless hand  
Upon the threshold of the morn,  
Like rosebuds by a tempest torn.

—Sweet Flowerets of the Martyr Band  
(LSB 969:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, the martyred innocents of Bethlehem showed forth Your praise not by speaking but by dying. Put to death in us all that is in conflict with Your will that our lives may bear witness to the faith we profess with our lips; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F05)

### The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Matthew’s Gospel tells of King Herod’s vicious plot against the infant Jesus after being “tricked” by the Wise Men. Threatened by the one “born King of the Jews,” Herod murdered all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years

old or younger (Matthew 2:16–18). These “innocents,” commemorated just three days after the celebration of Jesus’ birth, remind us not only of the terrible brutality of which human beings are capable but more significantly of the persecution Jesus endured from the beginning of His earthly life. Although Jesus’ life was providentially spared at this time, many years later, another ruler, Pontius Pilate, would sentence the innocent Jesus to death.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 254–262

## 29 DECEMBER

*David*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Give ear, O my people, to my | teaching;\*  
incline your ears to the words | of  
my mouth!

<sup>2</sup> I will open my mouth in a | parable;\*  
I will utter dark sayings | from of old,

<sup>3</sup> things that we have | heard and known,\*  
that our fathers have | told us.

<sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children,  
but tell to the coming generation the  
glorious deeds of the LORD, | and his  
might,\*

and the wonders that | he has done.

<sup>5</sup> He established a testimony in Jacob and  
appointed a law in | Israel,\*  
which he commanded our fathers  
to teach to their | children,

<sup>6</sup> that the next generation might know them,  
the children | yet unborn,\*

and arise and tell them  
to their | children,

<sup>7</sup>so that they should set their | hope in God\*  
and not forget the works of God, but  
keep his com- | mandments;  
—Psalm 78:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 93*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 55:1–13

The Compassion of the LORD

<sup>1</sup>“Come, everyone who thirsts,  
come to the waters;  
and he who has no money,  
come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price.

<sup>2</sup>Why do you spend your money  
for that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which  
does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food.

<sup>3</sup>Incline your ear, and come to me;  
hear, that your soul may live;  
and I will make with you  
an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, sure love for David.

<sup>4</sup>Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.

<sup>5</sup>Behold, you shall call a nation  
that you do not know,  
and a nation that did not know  
you shall run to you,

because of the LORD your God,  
and of the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.

<sup>6</sup>“Seek the LORD while he may be found;  
call upon him while he is near;

<sup>7</sup>let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;

let him return to the LORD, that he may have  
compassion on him,  
and to our God,  
for he will abundantly pardon.

<sup>8</sup>For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,  
declares the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

<sup>10</sup>“For as the rain and the snow come down  
from heaven  
and do not return there but water the  
earth,

making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower  
and bread to the eater,

<sup>11</sup>so shall my word be that goes out  
from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,

but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which  
I sent it.

<sup>12</sup>“For you shall go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall break forth into singing,  
and all the trees of the field  
shall clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup>Instead of the thorn  
shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the  
myrtle;

and it shall make a name for the LORD,  
an everlasting sign that shall not  
be cut off.”

### New Testament Reading: Luke 1:1–25

Dedication to Theophilus

<sup>1</sup>Inasmuch as many have undertaken to  
compile a narrative of the things that have

been accomplished among us, <sup>2</sup>just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, <sup>3</sup>it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup>that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

<sup>5</sup>In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup>And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. <sup>7</sup>But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

<sup>8</sup>Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, <sup>9</sup>according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup>And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup>And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup>And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup>But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup>And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup>for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup>And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the

Lord their God, <sup>17</sup>and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

<sup>18</sup>And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." <sup>19</sup>And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

<sup>20</sup>And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." <sup>21</sup>And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. <sup>22</sup>And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. <sup>23</sup>And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

<sup>24</sup>After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, <sup>25</sup>"Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

## Writing

"God became Man that man might become God!" This truth, cast in parallel phrases, summarized the Christmas mystery to the Christians of old. It impinged itself deeply in their spirituality; in almost identical words the truth occurs frequently in the Fathers and in ancient liturgical texts. God assumed a human nature to effect man's participation in the divine nature; God became a Child that we might become

children of God. The birthday of Christ inaugurates our divine birth. With Christ we were born God's children. God became Man! This truth is utterly incomprehensible to our puny human minds! That the eternal God, whom heaven and earth cannot contain, who bears the world in His hand as a nutshell, before whom a thousand years are as one day—that this eternal, omnipotent God should become Man! Would it not have proved His loving mercy had He appeared for a mere moment in the splendor of His majesty, amid thunder and lightening, as once on Sinai? No! Such would have shown far too little of His love and kindness. He wanted to be like us, to become a child of man, a poor child of poorest people. He wished to be born, in a cave, in a strange land, in hostile surroundings. Cold wind, hard straw, dumb animals—these were there to greet Him. The scene fills with amazement. What can we do, other than fall down in silence and adore! God put on the beggar's garb, became a tiny, crying Babe in order to offer man His divinity. In paradise, a fallen angel had promised: "Eat of this fruit and you will be like God." Man ate and became a prisoner of hell. On Christmas night another angel, the Church, stands before man, offers him a Food and says: "Eat of this and you will be like God." For the divine Food, the Flesh of the incarnate Son of God, makes us "partakers of the divine nature."

—Pius Parsch

### Hymnody

You, child, will go on before the Lord  
As prophet, His way preparing;  
To speak on behalf of God Most High,

His counsel of truth declaring:  
Rich mercy and grace for all whereby  
Iniquity is forgiven.

—Sing Praise to the God of Israel  
(*LSB* 936:3)

### Prayer of the Day

God of majesty, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven, we give You thanks for David who, through the Psalter, gave Your people hymns to sing with joy in our worship on earth so that we may glimpse Your beauty. Bring us to the fulfillment of that hope of perfection that will be ours as we stand before Your unveiled glory; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1133)

### David

David, the greatest of Israel's kings, ruled from about 1010 to 970 BC. The events of his life are found in 1 Samuel 16 through 1 Kings 2 and in 1 Chronicles 10–29. David was also gifted musically. He was skilled in playing the lyre and the author of no fewer than seventy-three psalms, including the beloved Psalm 23. His public and private character displayed a mixture of good (for example, his defeat of the giant Goliath [1 Samuel 17]) and evil (as in his adultery with Uriah's wife, followed by his murder of Uriah [2 Samuel 11]). David's greatness lay in his fierce loyalty to God as Israel's military and political leader, coupled with his willingness to acknowledge his sins and ask for God's forgiveness (2 Samuel 12; see also Psalm 51). It was under David's leadership that the people of Israel were united into a single nation with Jerusalem as its capital city.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 263–275

### 30 DECEMBER

#### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD,  
for- | ever;\*

with my mouth I will make known  
your faithfulness to all gener- | ations.

<sup>2</sup> For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up  
for- | ever;\*

in the heavens you will establish  
your | faithfulness.”

<sup>3</sup> You have said, “I have made a covenant  
with my | chosen one;\*

I have sworn to David my | servant:

<sup>4</sup> I will establish your offspring for- | ever,\*  
and build your throne  
for all gener- | ations.’ ”

<sup>14</sup> Righteousness and justice are the  
foundation | of your throne;\*  
steadfast love and faithfulness  
go be- | fore you.

<sup>15</sup> Blessèd are the people who know  
the | festal shout,\*  
who walk, O LORD, in the light | of  
your face,

<sup>16</sup> who exult in your name | all the day\*  
and in your righteousness are ex- | alted.

<sup>17</sup> For you are the glory | of their strength;\*  
by your favor our horn is ex- | alted.

<sup>18</sup> For our shield belongs | to the LORD,\*  
our king to the Holy One of | Israel.  
—Psalm 89:1–4, 14–18

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 132*

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 58:1–59:3, 14–21

True and False Fasting

<sup>1</sup>“Cry aloud; do not hold back;  
lift up your voice like a trumpet;  
declare to my people their transgression,  
to the house of Jacob their sins.

<sup>2</sup>Yet they seek me daily  
and delight to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that did  
righteousness

and did not forsake the judgment  
of their God;  
they ask of me righteous judgments;  
they delight to draw near to God.

<sup>3</sup>“Why have we fasted, and you see it not?  
Why have we humbled ourselves,  
and you take no knowledge of it?”  
Behold, in the day of your fast you seek  
your own pleasure,  
and oppress all your workers.

<sup>4</sup>Behold, you fast only to quarrel  
and to fight  
and to hit with a wicked fist.

Fasting like yours this day  
will not make your voice to be heard  
on high.

<sup>5</sup>Is such the fast that I choose,  
a day for a person to humble  
himself?

Is it to bow down his head like a reed,  
and to spread sackcloth and ashes  
under him?

Will you call this a fast,  
and a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup>“Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of wickedness,  
to undo the straps of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup>Is it not to share your bread  
with the hungry  
and bring the homeless poor  
into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover him,  
and not to hide yourself from your  
own flesh?  
<sup>8</sup>Then shall your light break forth  
like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up  
speedily;  
your righteousness shall go before you;  
the glory of the LORD shall be your  
rear guard.  
<sup>9</sup>Then you shall call, and the LORD  
will answer;  
you shall cry, and he will say,  
'Here I am.'  
If you take away the yoke  
from your midst,  
the pointing of the finger,  
and speaking wickedness,  
<sup>10</sup>if you pour yourself out for the hungry  
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,  
then shall your light rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be as the noonday.  
<sup>11</sup>And the LORD will guide you continually  
and satisfy your desire  
in scorched places  
and make your bones strong;  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters do not fail.  
<sup>12</sup>And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations  
of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer  
of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to dwell in.

<sup>13</sup>"If you turn back your foot from the  
Sabbath,  
from doing your pleasure  
on my holy day,  
and call the Sabbath a delight  
and the holy day of the LORD  
honorable;  
if you honor it, not going your own ways,  
or seeking your own pleasure,  
or talking idly;  
<sup>14</sup>then you shall take delight in the LORD,  
and I will make you ride on the  
heights of the earth;  
I will feed you with the heritage  
of Jacob your father,  
for the mouth of the LORD  
has spoken."

## Evil and Oppression

<sup>59:1</sup>Behold, the LORD's hand is not  
shortened, that it cannot save,  
or his ear dull, that it cannot hear;  
<sup>2</sup>but your iniquities have made  
a separation  
between you and your God,  
and your sins have hidden his face  
from you  
so that he does not hear.  
<sup>3</sup>For your hands are defiled with blood  
and your fingers with iniquity;  
your lips have spoken lies;  
your tongue mutters wickedness. . . .  
<sup>14</sup>Justice is turned back,  
and righteousness stands far away;  
for truth has stumbled in the public  
squares,  
and uprightness cannot enter.  
<sup>15</sup>Truth is lacking,  
and he who departs from evil makes  
himself a prey.

Judgment and Redemption

The LORD saw it, and it displeased him  
that there was no justice.

<sup>16</sup>He saw that there was no man,  
and wondered that there was no one  
to intercede;

then his own arm brought him salvation,  
and his righteousness upheld him.

<sup>17</sup>He put on righteousness as  
a breastplate,  
and a helmet of salvation on his head;  
he put on garments of vengeance  
for clothing,  
and wrapped himself in zeal  
as a cloak.

<sup>18</sup>According to their deeds,  
so will he repay,  
wrath to his adversaries,  
repayment to his enemies;  
to the coastlands he will render  
repayment.

<sup>19</sup>So they shall fear the name of the LORD  
from the west,  
and his glory from the rising  
of the sun;  
for he will come like a rushing stream,  
which the wind of the LORD drives.

<sup>20</sup>“And a Redeemer will come to Zion,  
to those in Jacob who turn from  
transgression,” declares the LORD.

<sup>21</sup>“And as for me, this is my covenant with  
them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit that is upon  
you, and my words that I have put in your  
mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth,  
or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out  
of the mouth of your children’s offspring,”  
says the LORD, “from this time forth and  
forevermore.”

**New Testament Reading: Luke 1:26–38**

Birth of Jesus Foretold

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel  
was sent from God to a city of Galilee named  
Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin betrothed to a man  
whose name was Joseph, of the house of  
David. And the virgin’s name was Mary.  
<sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, “Greetings,  
O favored one, the Lord is with you!” <sup>29</sup>But  
she was greatly troubled at the saying, and  
tried to discern what sort of greeting this  
might be. <sup>30</sup>And the angel said to her, “Do  
not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor  
with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive  
in your womb and bear a son, and you shall  
call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and  
will be called the Son of the Most High. And  
the Lord God will give to him the throne of  
his father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the  
house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom  
there will be no end.”

<sup>34</sup>And Mary said to the angel, “How will  
this be, since I am a virgin?”

<sup>35</sup>And the angel answered her, “The  
Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the  
power of the Most High will overshadow  
you; therefore the child to be born will be  
called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And behold,  
your relative Elizabeth in her old age has  
also conceived a son, and this is the sixth  
month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup>For  
nothing will be impossible with God.” <sup>38</sup>And  
Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the  
Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”  
And the angel departed from her.

**Writing**

We believe, teach, and confess that God’s  
Son from eternity has been a particular,  
distinct, entire, divine person. Yet He is

true, essential, perfect God with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time He received also the human nature into the unity of His person. He did not do this in such a way that there are now two persons or two Christs. Christ Jesus is now in one person at the same time true, eternal God, born of the Father from eternity, and a true man, born of the most blessed Virgin Mary. This is written in Romans 9:5, “from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever.” . . .

We believe, teach, and confess that it is the property of the divine nature to be almighty, eternal, infinite, everywhere present at the same time, and all-knowing. In other words, it agrees with the properties of [the divine] nature and its natural essence. These are essential attributes of the divine nature. Never in eternity do they become essential properties of the human nature.

On the other hand, these are properties of the human nature: being a bodily creation or creature, flesh and blood, finite and located in one place; it suffers, dies, ascends, and descends; it moves from one place to another, suffers hunger, thirst, cold, heat, and the like. These properties never become properties of the divine nature. . . .

On account of this personal union and communion of the natures, Mary, the most blessed Virgin, did not bear a mere man. But, as the angel ‹Gabriel› testifies, she bore a man who is truly the Son of the most high God [Luke 1:35]. He showed His divine majesty even in His mother’s womb, because He was born of a virgin, without violating her virginity. Therefore, she is truly the mother of God and yet has remained a virgin.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 6, 9–10, 24

## Hymnody

For this how wondrously He wrought!  
A maiden, in her lowly place,  
Became, in ways beyond all thought,  
The chosen vessel of His grace.

—From East to West (LSB 385:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L08)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 276–291

## 31 DECEMBER

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my | whole heart,\*  
in the company of the upright, in the congre- | gation.
- <sup>2</sup> Great are the works | of the LORD,\*  
studied by all who de- | light in them.
- <sup>3</sup> Full of splendor and majesty | is his work,\*  
and his righteousness endures for- | ever.
- <sup>4</sup> He has caused his wondrous works  
to be re- | membered;\*  
the LORD is gracious and | merciful.
- <sup>5</sup> He provides food for those who | fear him,\*  
he remembers his covenant for- | ever.
- <sup>6</sup> He has shown his people the power | of his works,\*  
in giving them the inheritance  
of the | nations.

<sup>10</sup>The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good under- | standing.\*

His praise endures for- | ever!

—Psalm 111:1–6, 10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 8*

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 60:1–22

The Future Glory of Israel

<sup>1</sup>Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD  
has risen upon you.

<sup>2</sup>For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;

but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will be seen upon you.

<sup>3</sup>And nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness  
of your rising.

<sup>4</sup>Lift up your eyes all around, and see;  
they all gather together,  
they come to you;

your sons shall come from afar,  
and your daughters shall be carried  
on the hip.

<sup>5</sup>Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and exult,

because the abundance of the sea  
shall be turned to you,  
the wealth of the nations  
shall come to you.

<sup>6</sup>A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,  
and shall bring good news, the praises of  
the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>All the flocks of Kedar shall be  
gathered to you;  
the rams of Nebaioth  
shall minister to you;

they shall come up with acceptance  
on my altar,  
and I will beautify my beautiful house.

<sup>8</sup>Who are these that fly like a cloud,  
and like doves to their windows?

<sup>9</sup>For the coastlands shall hope for me,  
the ships of Tarshish first,

to bring your children from afar,  
their silver and gold with them,  
for the name of the LORD your God,  
and for the Holy One of Israel,  
because he has made you beautiful.

<sup>10</sup>Foreigners shall build up your walls,  
and their kings shall minister to you;  
for in my wrath I struck you,  
but in my favor I have had mercy on you.

<sup>11</sup>Your gates shall be open continually;  
day and night they shall not be shut,  
that people may bring to you the wealth  
of the nations,  
with their kings led in procession.

<sup>12</sup>For the nation and kingdom  
that will not serve you shall perish;  
those nations shall be utterly laid waste.

<sup>13</sup>The glory of Lebanon shall come to you,  
the cypress, the plane, and the pine,  
to beautify the place of my sanctuary,  
and I will make the place  
of my feet glorious.

<sup>14</sup>The sons of those who afflicted you  
shall come bending low to you,  
and all who despised you  
shall bow down at your feet;  
they shall call you the City of the LORD,  
the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>15</sup>Whereas you have been forsaken and hated,  
with no one passing through,

I will make you majestic forever,  
a joy from age to age.

<sup>16</sup>You shall suck the milk of nations;  
you shall nurse at the breast of kings;

and you shall know that I,  
the LORD, am your Savior  
and your Redeemer,  
the Mighty One of Jacob.

<sup>17</sup>Instead of bronze I will bring gold,  
and instead of iron I will bring silver;  
instead of wood, bronze,  
instead of stones, iron.

I will make your overseers peace  
and your taskmasters righteousness.

<sup>18</sup>Violence shall no more be heard  
in your land,  
devastation or destruction  
within your borders;

you shall call your walls Salvation,  
and your gates Praise.

<sup>19</sup>The sun shall be no more  
your light by day,

nor for brightness shall the moon  
give you light;

but the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your God will be your glory.

<sup>20</sup>Your sun shall no more go down,  
nor your moon withdraw itself;

for the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your days of mourning  
shall be ended.

<sup>21</sup>Your people shall all be righteous;  
they shall possess the land forever,

the branch of my planting,  
the work of my hands,  
that I might be glorified.

<sup>22</sup>The least one shall become a clan,  
and the smallest one a mighty nation;

I am the LORD;  
in its time I will hasten it.

### **New Testament Reading: Luke 1:39–56**

Mary Visits Elizabeth

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary arose and went with  
haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah,

<sup>40</sup>and she entered the house of Zechariah  
and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>And when Elizabeth  
heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped  
in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with  
the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup>and she exclaimed with a  
loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and  
blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup>And why  
is this granted to me that the mother of my  
Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup>For behold, when  
the sound of your greeting came to my ears,  
the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And  
blessed is she who believed that there would  
be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her  
from the Lord.”

Mary’s Song of Praise: The Magnificat

<sup>46</sup>And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God  
my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>for he has looked on the humble estate of  
his servant.

For behold, from now on all  
generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup>for he who is mighty has done great  
things for me,  
and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup>And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the  
thoughts of their hearts;

<sup>52</sup>he has brought down the mighty from  
their thrones

and exalted those of humble estate;

<sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry  
with good things,

and the rich he has sent away empty.

<sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup>as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring  
forever.”

<sup>56</sup>And Mary remained with her about three  
months and returned to her home.

## Writing

There is nothing which is hid from God,  
but our very secrets are near to Him. Let us  
therefore do things as those who have Him  
dwelling in us, that we may be His temples and  
He may be in us as our God, which indeed He  
is. And He will manifest Himself before our  
faces. Wherefore we justly love Him. . . .

Why are we not all prudent, since we  
have received the knowledge of God, which is  
Jesus Christ? Why do we foolishly perish, not  
recognizing the gift which the Lord has truly  
sent? . . .

For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according  
to the appointment of God, conceived in the  
womb of Mary, of the seed of David, but by  
the Holy Spirit. He was born and baptized,  
that by His passion He might purify the water.

Now the virginity of Mary was hidden  
from the prince of this world, as was also  
her offspring, and the death of the Lord;  
three mysteries of renown, which were  
worked in silence by God. How, then, was He  
manifested to the world? A star shone forth  
in heaven above all the other stars, the light  
of which was inexpressible, while its novelty  
struck men with astonishment. And all the  
rest of the stars, with the sun and moon,  
formed a chorus to this star, and its light was  
exceedingly great above them all. And there  
was agitation felt as to the origins of this new  
spectacle, so unlike everything else. Hence  
every kind of magic was destroyed, and every  
kind of wickedness disappeared; ignorance

was removed, and the old kingdom abolished,  
God Himself being manifested in human  
form for the renewal of eternal life. And what  
had been prepared by God began. Henceforth  
all things were in a state of tumult, because  
He mediated the abolition of death.

—Ignatius

## Hymnody

My soul rejoices,  
My spirit voices—  
Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
For God my Savior  
Has shown me favor—  
Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
With praise and blessing,  
Join in confessing  
God, who is solely  
Mighty and holy—  
O sing the greatness of God the Lord!  
His mercy surely  
Shall rest securely  
On all who fear Him,  
Love and revere Him—  
O sing the greatness of God the Lord!  
—My Soul Rejoices (*LSB* 933:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Eternal God, we commit to Your mercy  
and forgiveness the year now ending and  
commend to Your blessing and love the times  
yet to come. In the new year, abide among  
us with Your Holy Spirit that we may always  
trust in the saving name of our Lord Jesus  
Christ, who lives and reigns with You and  
the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
(F06)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 292–302

### 1 JANUARY

*Circumcision and Name of Jesus*

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise,  
O servants | of the LORD,\*  
praise the name | of the LORD!
- <sup>2</sup> Blessèd be the name | of the LORD\*  
from this time forth and for- | evermore!
- <sup>3</sup> From the rising of the sun to its | setting,\*  
the name of the LORD is | to be praised!
- <sup>4</sup> The LORD is high above all | nations,\*  
and his glory above the | heavens!
- <sup>5</sup> Who is like the | LORD our God,\*  
who is seated | on high,  
<sup>6</sup> who looks | far down\*  
on the heavens | and the earth?
- <sup>7</sup> He raises the poor | from the dust\*  
and lifts the needy from the | ash heap,  
<sup>8</sup> to make them sit with | princes,\*  
with the princes of his | people.
- <sup>9</sup> He gives the barren wom- | an a home,\*  
making her the joyous mother of  
children. | Praise the LORD!  
—Psalm 113

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 21*

#### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 61:1–11

The Year of the LORD'S FAVOR

- <sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;

- he has sent me to bind up  
the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison  
to those who are bound;
- <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD'S favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;
- <sup>3</sup> to grant to those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a beautiful headdress  
instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the garment of praise  
instead of a faint spirit;
- that they may be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, that he may be  
glorified.
- <sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins;  
they shall raise up the former  
devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.
- <sup>5</sup> Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks;  
foreigners shall be your plowmen  
and vinedressers;
- <sup>6</sup> but you shall be called the priests of the  
LORD;  
they shall speak of you  
as the ministers of our God;  
you shall eat the wealth of the nations,  
and in their glory you shall boast.
- <sup>7</sup> Instead of your shame there shall be a  
double portion;  
instead of dishonor they shall rejoice  
in their lot;  
therefore in their land they shall possess  
a double portion;  
they shall have everlasting joy.
- <sup>8</sup> For I the LORD love justice;  
I hate robbery and wrong;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,

and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

<sup>9</sup>Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed.

<sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

### New Testament Reading: Luke 1:57–80

The Birth of John the Baptist

<sup>57</sup>Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. <sup>58</sup>And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. <sup>59</sup>And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, <sup>60</sup>but his mother answered, “No; he shall be called John.” <sup>61</sup>And they said to her, “None of your relatives is called by this name.” <sup>62</sup>And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. <sup>63</sup>And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote,

“His name is John.” And they all wondered. <sup>64</sup>And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. <sup>65</sup>And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, <sup>66</sup>and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, “What then will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord was with him.

Zechariah's Prophecy

<sup>67</sup>And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

<sup>68</sup>“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people <sup>69</sup>and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, <sup>70</sup>as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, <sup>71</sup>that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; <sup>72</sup>to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, <sup>73</sup>the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us <sup>74</sup>that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, <sup>75</sup>in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. <sup>77</sup>to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, <sup>78</sup>because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high

<sup>79</sup>to give light to those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way  
of peace.”

<sup>80</sup>And the child grew and became strong in  
spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the  
day of his public appearance to Israel.

### Writing

Should the Christian stand all day long at the grave of all joys which he enjoyed in past years? Through Holy Baptism a great stream of joy has been conducted in his heart, which does not drain away, but streams forward with his life until its waves carry him into the sea of a blessed eternity. Should the Christian be reminded all day long that the flowers of his youth fall more and more? He stands planted by God in the water of his Baptism as a palm tree which becomes greener and greener and whose leaves never wither. Yes, his Baptism makes death for him like a short winter's nap, out of which an eternal spring—an eternal youth—follows.

For Baptism is a bath that washed me not only once when I received it—washed me pure with Christ's blood—but it continuously washes me clean even daily for as long as I hold it in faith. For just as that same water of the flood drowned the sinners, but Noah with his relatives were brought to salvation and carried to Mount Ararat, so also did the water of my Baptism drown my sins, but my soul was brought to the eternal mountain of divine grace. And just as once those same waves of the Red Sea, which swallowed up Pharaoh and his army, were a protective wall for Israel, so also has my baptismal water swallowed up all of my damnation and is for me a sure wall before God's wrath and punishment. . . .

Now then, all of you who believe in God's Word, let your watchword for entering the new year be this: "I am baptized!" Although the world may laugh at this comfort, the enthusiasts vex its confidence . . . nevertheless, abandon any other dearly held pledges and speak only throughout the entire year to come, in all terrors of conscience and necessity through sin and death: "I am baptized! I am baptized! Hallelujah!" And you shall prevail! In every time of need, you will find comfort in your Baptism; on account of it Satan will flee from your faith and confession; and in death you will see heaven opened and will finally come into the joy of your Lord to celebrate a great year of jubilee, a year of praise, with all the angels forever and ever. Amen!

—C. F. W. Walther

### Hymnody

Sing praise to the God of Israel!  
Sing praise for His visitation!  
Redeeming His people from their sin,  
Accomplishing their salvation,  
Upraising a mighty horn within  
The house of His servant David!

—Sing Praise to the God of Israel  
(LSB 936:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, You made Your beloved Son, our Savior, subject to the Law and caused Him to shed His blood on our behalf. Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit that our hearts may be made pure from all sins; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F07)

## Circumcision of Our Lord

Already on the eighth day of Jesus' life, His destiny of atonement is revealed in His name and in His circumcision. At that moment, His blood is first shed and Jesus receives the name given to Him by the angel: "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). In the circumcision of Jesus, all people are circumcised once and for all, because He represents all humanity. In the Old Testament, for the believers who look to God's promise to be fulfilled in the Messiah, the benefits of circumcision include the forgiveness of sins, justification, and incorporation into the people of God. In the New Testament, St. Paul speaks of its counterpart, Holy Baptism, as a "circumcision made without hands" and as "the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11).

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 303–310

## 2 JANUARY

*J. K. Wilhelm Loehe, Pastor*

## Psalmody

<sup>5</sup>For God alone, O my soul, wait in | silence,\*  
for my hope is | from him.

<sup>6</sup>He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my | fortress; \*  
I shall not be | shaken.

<sup>7</sup>On God rests my salvation and my | glory;\*  
my mighty rock, my refuge | is God.

<sup>8</sup>Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart be- | fore him;\*  
God is a refuge | for us.

<sup>11</sup>Once God has spoken;  
twice have I | heard this:\*  
that power belongs to God, <sup>12</sup>and that to  
you, O Lord, belongs | steadfast love.

For you will render | to a man\*  
according | to his work.  
—Psalm 62:5–8, 11–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 98*

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 62:1–12

Zion's Coming Salvation

<sup>1</sup>For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem's sake  
I will not be quiet,

until her righteousness goes forth  
as brightness,  
and her salvation as a burning torch.

<sup>2</sup>The nations shall see your righteousness,  
and all the kings your glory,  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

<sup>3</sup>You shall be a crown of beauty  
in the hand of the LORD,  
and a royal diadem in the hand  
of your God.

<sup>4</sup>You shall no more be termed Forsaken,  
and your land shall no more  
be termed Desolate,

but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,  
and your land Married;

for the LORD delights in you,  
and your land shall be married.

<sup>5</sup>For as a young man marries  
a young woman,  
so shall your sons marry you,  
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
so shall your God rejoice over you.

<sup>6</sup>On your walls, O Jerusalem,  
I have set watchmen;  
all the day and all the night

they shall never be silent.  
 You who put the LORD in remembrance,  
 take no rest,  
<sup>7</sup>and give him no rest  
 until he establishes Jerusalem  
 and makes it a praise in the earth.  
<sup>8</sup>The LORD has sworn by his right hand  
 and by his mighty arm:  
 “I will not again give your grain  
 to be food for your enemies,  
 and foreigners shall not drink your wine  
 for which you have labored;  
<sup>9</sup>but those who garner it shall eat it  
 and praise the LORD,  
 and those who gather it shall drink it  
 in the courts of my sanctuary.”  
<sup>10</sup>Go through, go through the gates;  
 prepare the way for the people;  
 build up, build up the highway;  
 clear it of stones;  
 lift up a signal over the peoples.  
<sup>11</sup>Behold, the LORD has proclaimed  
 to the end of the earth:  
 Say to the daughter of Zion,  
 “Behold, your salvation comes;  
 behold, his reward is with him,  
 and his recompense before him.”  
<sup>12</sup>And they shall be called The Holy People,  
 The Redeemed of the LORD;  
 and you shall be called Sought Out,  
 A City Not Forsaken.

### New Testament Reading: Luke 2:1–20

The Birth of Jesus Christ

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph also went up from Galilee,

from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

<sup>8</sup>And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest,  
 and on earth peace among those  
 with whom he is pleased!”

<sup>15</sup>When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup>And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup>And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up

all these things, pondering them in her heart.  
<sup>20</sup>And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

## Writing

In worship the congregation experiences its Lord most intimately. Here it lives in nearest proximity to its Groom in a heavenly life on earth, an earthly life in heaven.

Worship is the most beautiful flower of earthly life. Just like land in the middle of an ocean, the Word and the Sacraments stand in the inner life and worship of the congregation. You have one week behind you, a new week lies in front of you. Between these two weeks is the day of Communion Sunday. You desire to draw near to God with the congregation. What do you, whether you are a shepherd or a sheep, have to do first? You do what all religions say is necessary for the soul: you cleanse it like feet that have become dirty from the activity of daily life. In other words, you prepare yourself for worship by confessing your sins and receiving absolution. Being cleansed from sin, you enter into the joys of the particular festival day or Sunday. But the worshiper finds that earth still has other burdens and sorrows, both present and future. Life, death, and eternity, with all of their bitter fruits and consequences, threaten you as you journey to the heavenly kingdom. Worries burden you and keep burdening you. But no longer does sin torture you, no longer do you fear evil, no longer do you sigh longingly, but joyful confidence fills your soul. You sit beneath the face of the Lord. In the sermon you begin to experience the blessed communion of the saints who rejoice in the Lord. The

worshipping congregation experiences itself as the Bride of the Lord, rich not only in and through Him but also in and through one another. The congregation, in its fullness, thinks of the special needs and miseries upon the earth, delights in all good things, and goes before the altar of the Lord with intercessions, petitions, and prayers. All worshipers are blessed and approach the throne of blessing knowing they are worthy. The worshipers realize that the Church is one unit both here and everywhere. Pilgrims are one in their prayers and are cleansed with all of the blessed saints in heaven.

—Wilhelm Loehe

## Hymnody

How should I not have known Isaiah would  
 be there,

His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding  
 heart I stare:

A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,  
 A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.

—Where Shepherds Lately Knelt  
 (LSB 369:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Most glorious Trinity, in Your mercy we commit to You this day our bodies and souls, all our ways and goings, all our deeds and purposes. We pray You, so open our hearts and mouths that we may praise Your name, which above all names alone is holy. And since You have created for us the praise of Your holy name, grant that our lives may be for Your honor and that we may serve You in love and fear; for You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, live and reign, one God, now and forever. (1134)

**J. K. Wilhelm Loehe, Pastor**

Although he never left Germany, Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, born in Fuerth in 1808, had a profound impact on the development of Lutheranism in North America. Serving as pastor in the Bavarian village of Neuendettelsau, he recognized the need for workers in developing lands and assisted in training emergency helpers to be sent as missionary pastors to North America, Brazil, and Australia. A number of the men he sent to the United States became founders of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Through his financial support, a theological school in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and a teachers' institute in Saginaw, Michigan, were established. Loehe was known for his confessional integrity and his interest in liturgy and catechetics. His devotion to works of Christian charity led to the establishment of a deaconess training house and homes for the aged.

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Large Catechism I 311–323

**3 JANUARY****Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> My heart is steadfast, | O God!\*  
I will sing and make melody with all  
my | being!
- <sup>2</sup> Awake, O | harp and lyre!\*  
I will a- | wake the dawn!
- <sup>3</sup> I will give thanks to you, O LORD,  
among the | peoples,\*  
I will sing praises to you  
among the | nations.

- <sup>4</sup> For your steadfast love is great  
above the | heavens;\*  
your faithfulness reaches | to the clouds.
- <sup>5</sup> Be exalted, O God, above the | heavens!\*  
Let your glory be over | all the earth!
- <sup>6</sup> That your beloved ones may be  
de- | livered,\*  
give salvation by your right hand  
and | answer me!
- <sup>12</sup> Oh grant us help a- | gainst the foe,\*  
for vain is the salva- | tion of man!
- <sup>13</sup> With God we shall do | valiantly;\*  
it is he who will tread | down our foes.  
—Psalm 108:1–6, 12–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 110*

**Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 63:1–14**

The LORD's Day of Vengeance

- <sup>1</sup> Who is this who comes from Edom,  
in crimsoned garments from Bozrah,  
he who is splendid in his apparel,  
marching in the greatness of his  
strength?  
“It is I, speaking in righteousness,  
mighty to save.”
- <sup>2</sup> Why is your apparel red,  
and your garments like his  
who treads in the winepress?
- <sup>3</sup> “I have trodden the winepress alone,  
and from the peoples  
no one was with me;  
I trod them in my anger  
and trampled them in my wrath;  
their lifeblood spattered on my garments,  
and stained all my apparel.
- <sup>4</sup> For the day of vengeance was in my heart,  
and my year of redemption had come.
- <sup>5</sup> I looked, but there was no one to help;  
I was appalled,  
but there was no one to uphold;

so my own arm brought me salvation,  
and my wrath upheld me.

<sup>6</sup>I trampled down the peoples in my anger;  
I made them drunk in my wrath,  
and I poured out their lifeblood  
on the earth.”

The LORD'S Mercy Remembered

<sup>7</sup>I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD,  
the praises of the LORD,  
according to all that the LORD has granted us,  
and the great goodness to the house  
of Israel

that he has granted them according  
to his compassion,  
according to the abundance of his  
steadfast love.

<sup>8</sup>For he said, “Surely they are my people,  
children who will not deal falsely.”  
And he became their Savior.

<sup>9</sup>In all their affliction he was afflicted,  
and the angel of his presence saved them;  
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all  
the days of old.

<sup>10</sup>But they rebelled  
and grieved his Holy Spirit;  
therefore he turned to be their enemy,  
and himself fought against them.

<sup>11</sup>Then he remembered the days of old,  
of Moses and his people.

Where is he who brought them up  
out of the sea  
with the shepherds of his flock?

Where is he who put in the midst of them  
his Holy Spirit,

<sup>12</sup>who caused his glorious arm  
to go at the right hand of Moses,  
who divided the waters before them  
to make for himself an everlasting name,  
<sup>13</sup>who led them through the depths?

Like a horse in the desert,  
they did not stumble.

<sup>14</sup>Like livestock that go down into the valley,  
the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest.

So you led your people,  
to make for yourself a glorious name.

## New Testament Reading: Luke 2:21–40

[The Shepherds and the Angels]

<sup>21</sup>And at the end of eight days, when  
he was circumcised, he was called Jesus,  
the name given by the angel before he was  
conceived in the womb.

Jesus Presented at the Temple

<sup>22</sup>And when the time came for their  
purification according to the Law of Moses,  
they brought him up to Jerusalem to present  
him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the Law  
of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the  
womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) <sup>24</sup>and  
to offer a sacrifice according to what is said  
in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves,  
or two young pigeons.” <sup>25</sup>Now there was a  
man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon,  
and this man was righteous and devout,  
waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the  
Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup>And it had been  
revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he  
would not see death before he had seen the  
Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup>And he came in the Spirit into  
the temple, and when the parents brought in  
the child Jesus, to do for him according to the  
custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup>he took him up in his  
arms and blessed God and said,

<sup>29</sup>“Lord, now you are letting your servant  
depart in peace,

according to your word;

<sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation

<sup>31</sup>that you have prepared in the  
presence of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup>And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup>And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup>(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

<sup>36</sup>And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup>and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup>And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

The Return to Nazareth

<sup>39</sup>And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

## Writing

Every penitent sinner ought to believe (i.e., place his confidence) in the Lord Christ alone. For Christ “was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25). . . . His obedience is credited to us for righteousness before God’s strict court, so that the Law, as set forth above, is a ministry that kills through the letter and preaches condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:6, 9). The Gospel “is the power of God for

salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16), which preaches righteousness and gives the Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:18; Galatians 3:2). Dr. Luther taught this distinction with special diligence in nearly all his writings and has properly shown that the knowledge of God from the Gospel is far different from that which is taught and learned from the Law. Even the pagans, to a certain extent, had a knowledge of God from the natural law. But they neither knew Him nor glorified Him correctly (Romans 1:19–32) [LW 22:150–54].

[Using Law and Gospel]

From the beginning of the world these two proclamations have always been taught alongside each other in God’s Church, with a proper distinction. The descendants of the well-respected patriarchs, and the patriarchs themselves, called to mind constantly how in the beginning a person had been created righteous and holy by God. They know that through the fraud of the Serpent, Adam transgressed God’s command, became a sinner, and corrupted and cast himself with all his descendants into death and eternal condemnation. They encouraged and comforted themselves again by the preaching about the woman’s seed, who would bruise the Serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15); Abraham’s seed, in whom “all the nations of the earth [will] be blessed” (Genesis 22:18); David’s Son, who should “bring back the preserved of Israel” and be “a light for the nations” (Isaiah 49:6; see also Psalm 110:1; Luke 2:32), and who “was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities . . . and with His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

—Solid Declaration of the  
Formula of Concord V 22–23

## Hymnody

Christ is the hope and saving light  
Of those in blindness;  
He guides and comforts those in night  
By His kindness.  
For Your people Israel  
In Him find joy and glory.  
—In Peace and Joy I Now Depart  
(LSB 938:4)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, our Maker and Redeemer,  
You wonderfully created us and in  
the incarnation of Your Son yet more  
wondrously restored our human nature.  
Grant that we may ever be alive in Him who  
made Himself to be like us; through Jesus  
Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with  
You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
forever. (L09)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism I 324–333

## 4 JANUARY

## Psalmody

- <sup>6</sup>Sacrifice and offering you have not desired,  
but you have given me an | open ear.\*  
Burnt offering and sin offering  
you have | not required.
- <sup>7</sup>Then I said, “Behold, | I have come;\*”  
in the scroll of the book  
it is writ- | ten of me:
- <sup>8</sup>I desire to do your will, | O my God;\*”  
your law is with- | in my heart.”

<sup>9</sup>I have told the glad news of deliverance in  
the great congre- | gation;\*”  
behold, I have not restrained my lips,  
as you know, | O LORD.

<sup>10</sup>I have not hidden your deliverance  
within my heart; I have spoken of your  
faithfulness and your sal- | vation;\*”  
I have not concealed your steadfast love  
and your faithfulness from the  
great congre- | gation.  
—Psalm 40:6–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 65*

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 63:15–65:7

Prayer for Mercy

<sup>15</sup>Look down from heaven and see,  
from your holy and beautiful habitation.

Where are your zeal and your might?  
The stirring of your inner parts  
and your compassion  
are held back from me.

<sup>16</sup>For you are our Father,  
though Abraham does not know us,  
and Israel does not acknowledge us;  
you, O LORD, are our Father,  
our Redeemer from of old is your name.

<sup>17</sup>O LORD, why do you make us wander  
from your ways  
and harden our heart,  
so that we fear you not?

Return for the sake of your servants,  
the tribes of your heritage.

<sup>18</sup>Your holy people held possession  
for a little while;  
our adversaries have trampled down  
your sanctuary.

<sup>19</sup>We have become like those over whom  
you have never ruled,  
like those who are not called  
by your name.

<sup>64:1</sup>Oh that you would rend the heavens  
and come down,

that the mountains might quake  
at your presence—

<sup>2</sup>as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—

to make your name known  
to your adversaries,  
and that the nations might tremble  
at your presence!

<sup>3</sup>When you did awesome things  
that we did not look for,  
you came down, the mountains quaked  
at your presence.

<sup>4</sup>From of old no one has heard  
or perceived by the ear,  
no eye has seen a God besides you,  
who acts for those who wait for him.

<sup>5</sup>You meet him who joyfully works  
righteousness,  
those who remember you in your ways.

Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;  
in our sins we have been a long time,  
and shall we be saved?

<sup>6</sup>We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like  
a polluted garment.

We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind,  
take us away.

<sup>7</sup>There is no one who calls upon your name,  
who rouses himself to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have made us melt in the hand  
of our iniquities.

<sup>8</sup>But now, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.

<sup>9</sup>Be not so terribly angry, O LORD,  
and remember not iniquity forever.

Behold, please look,  
we are all your people.

<sup>10</sup>Your holy cities have become a wilderness;  
Zion has become a wilderness,  
Jerusalem a desolation.

<sup>11</sup>Our holy and beautiful house,  
where our fathers praised you,  
has been burned by fire,  
and all our pleasant places  
have become ruins.

<sup>12</sup>Will you restrain yourself at these things,  
O LORD?

Will you keep silent,  
and afflict us so terribly?

Judgment and Salvation

<sup>65:1</sup>I was ready to be sought by those who did  
not ask for me;  
I was ready to be found by those who did  
not seek me.

I said, “Here am I, here am I,”  
to a nation that was not called  
by my name.

<sup>2</sup>I spread out my hands all the day  
to a rebellious people,  
who walk in a way that is not good,  
following their own devices;

<sup>3</sup>a people who provoke me  
to my face continually,  
sacrificing in gardens  
and making offerings on bricks;

<sup>4</sup>who sit in tombs,  
and spend the night in secret places;  
who eat pig’s flesh,  
and broth of tainted meat  
is in their vessels;

<sup>5</sup>who say, “Keep to yourself,  
do not come near me,  
for I am too holy for you.”

These are a smoke in my nostrils,  
a fire that burns all the day.

<sup>6</sup>Behold, it is written before me:

“I will not keep silent, but I will repay;

I will indeed repay into their bosom

<sup>7</sup>both your iniquities and your fathers’  
iniquities together,

says the LORD;

because they made offerings

on the mountains

and insulted me on the hills,

I will measure into their bosom

payment for their former deeds.”

### New Testament Reading: Luke 2:41–52

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

<sup>41</sup>Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup>And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. <sup>43</sup>And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, <sup>44</sup>but supposing him to be in the group they went a day’s journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, <sup>45</sup>and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. <sup>46</sup>After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup>And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup>And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” <sup>49</sup>And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” <sup>50</sup>And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. <sup>51</sup>And he went down with them and came to

Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

<sup>52</sup>And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

### Writing

When I feel that I have become cool and joyless in prayer because of other tasks or thoughts (for the flesh and the devil always impede and obstruct prayer), I take my little psalter, hurry to my room, or, if it be the day and hour for it, to the church where a congregation is assembled and, as time permits, I say quietly to myself and word-for-word the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and, if I have time, some words of Christ or of Paul, or some psalms, just as a child might do.

It is a good thing to let prayer be the first business of the morning and the last at night. Guard yourself carefully against those false, deluding ideas which tell you, “Wait a little while. I will pray in an hour; first I must attend to this or that.” Such thoughts get you away from prayer into other affairs which so hold your attention and involve you that nothing comes of prayer for that day. . . .

Finally, mark this, that you must always speak the Amen firmly. Never doubt that God in his mercy will surely hear you and say “yes” to your prayers. Never think that you are kneeling or standing alone, rather think that the whole of Christendom, all devout Christians, are standing there beside you and you are standing among them in a common, united petition which God cannot disdain. Do not leave your prayer without having said or thought, “Very well, God has heard my prayer; this I know as a certainty and a truth.” That is what Amen means.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Within the Father's house  
 The Son has found His home,  
 And to His temple suddenly  
 The Lord of life has come.  
 —Within the Father's House  
 (LSB 410:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You have poured into our hearts the true Light of Your incarnate Word. Grant that this Light may shine forth in our lives; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L10)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism II 1–8

## 5 JANUARY

## Psalmody

- <sup>34</sup>Wait for the LORD and keep his way,  
 and he will exalt you to inher- | it the land;\*  
 you will look on when the wicked | are  
 cut off.
- <sup>35</sup>I have seen a wicked, | ruthless man,\*  
 spreading himself like a green | laurel tree.
- <sup>36</sup>But he passed away, and behold,  
 he | was no more;\*  
 though I sought him,  
 he could | not be found.
- <sup>37</sup>Mark the blameless and behold  
 the | upright,\*  
 for there is a future for the | man of peace.

- <sup>38</sup>But transgressors shall be  
 altogether | destroyed;\*  
 the future of the wicked shall | be cut off.
- <sup>39</sup>The salvation of the righteous is | from  
 the LORD;\*  
 he is their stronghold  
 in the time of | trouble.
- <sup>40</sup>The LORD helps them and de- | livers them;\*  
 he delivers them from the wicked  
 and saves them, because they take  
 ref- |uge in him.  
 —Psalm 37:34–40

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 10*

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 65:8–25

[Judgment and Salvation]

- <sup>8</sup>Thus says the LORD:  
 “As the new wine is found in the cluster,  
 and they say, ‘Do not destroy it,  
 for there is a blessing in it,’  
 so I will do for my servants’ sake,  
 and not destroy them all.
- <sup>9</sup>I will bring forth offspring from Jacob,  
 and from Judah possessors  
 of my mountains;  
 my chosen shall possess it,  
 and my servants shall dwell there.
- <sup>10</sup>Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks,  
 and the Valley of Achor a place  
 for herds to lie down,  
 for my people who have sought me.
- <sup>11</sup>But you who forsake the LORD,  
 who forget my holy mountain,  
 who set a table for Fortune  
 and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny,  
<sup>12</sup>I will destine you to the sword,  
 and all of you shall bow down  
 to the slaughter,  
 because, when I called, you did not answer;  
 when I spoke, you did not listen,

but you did what was evil in my eyes  
and chose what I did not delight in.”

<sup>13</sup>Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

“Behold, my servants shall eat,  
but you shall be hungry;

behold, my servants shall drink,  
but you shall be thirsty;

behold, my servants shall rejoice,  
but you shall be put to shame;

<sup>14</sup>behold, my servants shall sing  
for gladness of heart,  
but you shall cry out for pain of heart  
and shall wail for breaking of spirit.

<sup>15</sup>You shall leave your name to my chosen  
for a curse,  
and the Lord GOD will put you to death,  
but his servants he will call  
by another name.

<sup>16</sup>So that he who blesses himself in the land  
shall bless himself by the God of truth,  
and he who takes an oath in the land  
shall swear by the God of truth;  
because the former troubles are forgotten  
and are hidden from my eyes.

New Heavens and a New Earth

<sup>17</sup>“For behold, I create new heavens  
and a new earth,  
and the former things  
shall not be remembered  
or come into mind.

<sup>18</sup>But be glad and rejoice forever  
in that which I create;  
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,  
and her people to be a gladness.

<sup>19</sup>I will rejoice in Jerusalem  
and be glad in my people;  
no more shall be heard  
in it the sound of weeping  
and the cry of distress.

<sup>20</sup>No more shall there be in it  
an infant who lives but a few days,  
or an old man who does not fill out  
his days,

for the young man shall die  
a hundred years old,  
and the sinner a hundred years old  
shall be accursed.

<sup>21</sup>They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards  
and eat their fruit.

<sup>22</sup>They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days  
of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work  
of their hands.

<sup>23</sup>They shall not labor in vain  
or bear children for calamity,  
for they shall be the offspring  
of the blessed of the LORD,  
and their descendants with them.

<sup>24</sup>Before they call I will answer;  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.

<sup>25</sup>The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,  
and dust shall be the serpent’s food.

They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain,”  
says the LORD.

### **New Testament Reading: Luke 3:1–20**

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of  
Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being  
governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch  
of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch  
of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and  
Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high  
priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word  
of God came to John the son of Zechariah

in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>4</sup>As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying  
in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain  
and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall become straight,  
and the rough places  
shall become level ways,

<sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation  
of God.’”

<sup>7</sup>He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

<sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” <sup>11</sup>And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” <sup>12</sup>Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” <sup>13</sup>And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by

false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

<sup>15</sup>As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, <sup>16</sup>John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>18</sup>So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. <sup>19</sup>But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother’s wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, <sup>20</sup>added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

## Writing

How mighty is the grace of water, in the sight of God and His Christ, for the confirmation of Baptism! Never is Christ without water: He who is Himself baptized in water (Matt 3:13–17); inaugurates in water the first display of His power when invited to the wedding in Cana (John 2:1–11); in His preaching He invites the thirsty to His own eternal water (John 7:37–38; John 4:6ff.); He approves, among the works of charity, the cup of water offered to a poor child (Matthew 10:42); He gathered His strength at a well (John 4:6); walks over the water (Matthew 14:25ff.); calms the waves (Mark 4:39); and serves His disciples with washing by water (John 13:5). Even His Passion bears witness to the power of Baptism’s waters, for while

He was being handed over to the cross, water intervened and was a witness against Pilate's hands (Matthew 27:24). And when He is wounded, after His death, water bursts forth from His side that had been pierced with the soldier's lance (John 19:34)!

—Tertullian

### Hymnody

We praise You for the Baptist,  
Forerunner of the Word,  
Our true Elijah, making  
A highway for the Lord.  
The last and greatest prophet,  
He saw the dawning ray  
Of light that grows in splendor  
Until the perfect day.

—By All Your Saints in Warfare  
(LSB 518:18)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, through John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, You once proclaimed salvation. Now grant that we may know this salvation and serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F20)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism II 9–24

## EPIPHANY SEASON

*Propers for the Epiphany of Our Lord and the Epiphany Season for use with Matins and Vespers can be found on page 000.*

### The Epiphany of Our Lord

6 JANUARY

#### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;  
I address my verses | to the king;\*  
my tongue is like the pen  
of a | ready scribe.

<sup>2</sup> You are the most handsome of the sons of  
men; grace is poured up- | on your lips;\*  
therefore God has blessed you for- | ever.

<sup>3</sup> Gird your sword on your thigh,  
O | mighty one,\*  
in your splendor and | majesty!

<sup>4</sup> In your majesty ride out victoriously  
for the cause of truth and meekness  
and | righteousness;\*

let your right hand teach you | awesome  
deeds!

<sup>5</sup> Your arrows are sharp in the heart  
of the king's | enemies;\*  
the peoples fall | under you.

<sup>6</sup> Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.  
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter  
of up- | rightness;\*

<sup>7</sup> you have loved righteousness  
and hated | wickedness.

—Psalm 45:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 72*

**Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 66:1–20**

The Humble and Contrite in Spirit

<sup>1</sup>Thus says the LORD:

“Heaven is my throne,  
and the earth is my footstool;  
what is the house that you would  
build for me,

and what is the place of my rest?

<sup>2</sup>All these things my hand has made,  
and so all these things came to be,  
declares the LORD.

But this is the one to whom I will look:  
he who is humble and contrite  
in spirit  
and trembles at my word.

<sup>3</sup>“He who slaughters an ox is like one  
who kills a man;  
he who sacrifices a lamb,  
like one who breaks a dog’s neck;  
he who presents a grain offering,  
like one who offers pig’s blood;  
he who makes a memorial  
offering of frankincense,  
like one who blesses an idol.

These have chosen their own ways,  
and their soul delights  
in their abominations;

<sup>4</sup>I also will choose harsh treatment  
for them  
and bring their fears upon them,  
because when I called, no one answered,  
when I spoke, they did not listen;  
but they did what was evil in my eyes  
and chose that in which  
I did not delight.”

<sup>5</sup>Hear the word of the LORD,  
you who tremble at his word:  
“Your brothers who hate you  
and cast you out for my name’s sake

have said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified,  
that we may see your joy’;  
but it is they who shall be put  
to shame.

<sup>6</sup>“The sound of an uproar from the city!  
A sound from the temple!  
The sound of the LORD,  
rendering recompense  
to his enemies!

Rejoice with Jerusalem

<sup>7</sup>“Before she was in labor  
she gave birth;  
before her pain came upon her  
she delivered a son.  
<sup>8</sup>Who has heard such a thing?  
Who has seen such things?  
Shall a land be born in one day?  
Shall a nation be brought forth  
in one moment?

For as soon as Zion was in labor  
she brought forth her children.

<sup>9</sup>“Shall I bring to the point of birth  
and not cause to bring forth?”  
says the LORD;

“shall I, who cause to bring forth,  
shut the womb?”  
says your God.

<sup>10</sup>“Rejoice with Jerusalem,  
and be glad for her,  
all you who love her;  
rejoice with her in joy,  
all you who mourn over her;

<sup>11</sup>that you may nurse and be satisfied  
from her consoling breast;  
that you may drink deeply with delight  
from her glorious abundance.”

<sup>12</sup>For thus says the LORD:  
“Behold, I will extend peace to her  
like a river,

and the glory of the nations  
 like an overflowing stream;  
 and you shall nurse, you shall be carried  
 upon her hip,  
 and bounced upon her knees.  
<sup>13</sup>As one whom his mother comforts,  
 so I will comfort you;  
 you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.  
<sup>14</sup>You shall see,  
 and your heart shall rejoice;  
 your bones shall flourish  
 like the grass;  
 and the hand of the LORD shall be known  
 to his servants,  
 and he shall show his indignation  
 against his enemies.

Final Judgment and Glory of the LORD

<sup>15</sup>“For behold, the LORD will come in fire,  
 and his chariots like the whirlwind,  
 to render his anger in fury,  
 and his rebuke with flames of fire.  
<sup>16</sup>For by fire will the LORD enter  
 into judgment,  
 and by his sword, with all flesh;  
 and those slain by the LORD  
 shall be many.

<sup>17</sup>“Those who sanctify and purify  
 themselves to go into the gardens, following  
 one in the midst, eating pig’s flesh and the  
 abomination and mice, shall come to an end  
 together, declares the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>“For I know their works and their  
 thoughts, and the time is coming to gather  
 all nations and tongues. And they shall come  
 and shall see my glory, <sup>19</sup>and I will set a sign  
 among them. And from them I will send  
 survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and  
 Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan,  
 to the coastlands far away, that have not  
 heard my fame or seen my glory. And they

shall declare my glory among the nations.  
<sup>20</sup>And they shall bring all your brothers from  
 all the nations as an offering to the LORD,  
 on horses and in chariots and in litters and  
 on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy  
 mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as  
 the Israelites bring their grain offering in a  
 clean vessel to the house of the LORD.”

### New Testament Reading: Luke 3:21–38

[John the Baptist Prepares the Way]

<sup>21</sup>Now when all the people were baptized,  
 and when Jesus also had been baptized and  
 was praying, the heavens were opened, <sup>22</sup>and  
 the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily  
 form, like a dove; and a voice came from  
 heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I  
 am well pleased.”

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

<sup>23</sup>Jesus, when he began his ministry, was  
 about thirty years of age, being the son (as  
 was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,  
<sup>24</sup>the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the  
 son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of  
 Joseph, <sup>25</sup>the son of Mattathias, the son of  
 Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the  
 son of Naggai, <sup>26</sup>the son of Maath, the son  
 of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of  
 Josech, the son of Joda, <sup>27</sup>the son of Joanan,  
 the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the  
 son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, <sup>28</sup>the son of  
 Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam,  
 the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, <sup>29</sup>the son  
 of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim,  
 the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, <sup>30</sup>the  
 son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of  
 Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim,  
<sup>31</sup>the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the  
 son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son  
 of David, <sup>32</sup>the son of Jesse, the son of Obed,

the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon,<sup>33</sup> the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah,<sup>34</sup> the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,<sup>35</sup> the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah,<sup>36</sup> the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,<sup>37</sup> the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan,<sup>38</sup> the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

### Writing

Jesus goes up out of the water . . . for with Himself He carries up the world . . . and sees heaven opened, which Adam had shut against himself and all his posterity, as the gates of Paradise by the flaming sword. And the Spirit bears witness to His Godhead, for He descends upon one that is like Him. So also does the voice from heaven, for Jesus came from heaven, witness to His Godhead. And the Spirit comes like a dove, for He honors the body of Jesus, for this also was God through its union with God, so the Spirit is also seen in a bodily form. Moreover, the dove has from distant ages desired to proclaim the end of the deluge. But if you are to judge the Godhead by bulk and weight, and the Spirit seems to you a small thing because He came in the form of a dove, O man of contemptible littleness of thought concerning the greatest of things, you must also to be consistent despise the kingdom of heaven because it is compared to a mustard seed. And you must exalt the adversary above the majesty of Jesus, because he is called a

great mountain and leviathan, king of that which lives in the water, whereas Christ is called the lamb, and the pearl, and the drop of rain that comes from heaven, and similar names.

—Gregory Nazianzen

### Hymnody

These truths on Jordan's banks were shown  
By mighty word and wonder.  
The Father's voice from heav'n came down,  
Which we do well to ponder:  
"This man is My beloved Son,  
In whom My heart has pleasure.  
Him you must hear, and Him alone,  
And trust in fullest measure  
The word that He has spoken."

—To Jordan Came the Christ,  
Our Lord (*LSB* 406:3)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles. Lead us, who know You by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L11)

### The Epiphany of Our Lord

The feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord commemorates no event but presents an idea that assumes concrete form only through the facts of our Lord's life. The idea of Epiphany is that the Christ who was born in Bethlehem is recognized by the world as God. At Christmas, God appears as man, and at Epiphany, this man appears before the world as God. That Christ became man needed no proof. But that this man, this helpless child,

is God needed proof. The manifestations of the Trinity, the signs and wonders performed by this man, and all His miracles have the purpose of proving to men that Jesus is God. Lately, especially in the Western Church, the story of the Magi has been associated with this feast day. As Gentiles who were brought to faith in Jesus Christ, the Magi represent all believers from the Gentile world.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism II 25–33

## 7 JANUARY

### Psalmody

<sup>4</sup>There is a river whose streams make glad the cit- | y of God,\*  
the holy habitation of the | Most High.

<sup>5</sup>God is in the midst of her;  
she shall | not be moved;\*  
God will help her when | morning dawns.

<sup>6</sup>The nations rage, the kingdoms | totter;\*  
he utters his voice, the | earth melts.

<sup>8</sup>Come, behold the works | of the LORD,\*  
how he has brought desolations | on the earth.

<sup>9</sup>He makes wars cease to the end | of the earth;\*  
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the chariots | with fire.

<sup>10</sup>“Be still, and know that | I am God.\*  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted | in the earth!”

<sup>11</sup>The LORD of hosts is | with us;\*  
the God of Jacob is our | fortress.  
—Psalm 46:4–6, 8–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 45*

### Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 1:1–14, 22–28

Ezekiel in Babylon

<sup>1</sup>In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. <sup>2</sup>On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin), <sup>3</sup>the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Chebar canal, and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.

The Glory of the LORD

<sup>4</sup>As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal. <sup>5</sup>And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, <sup>6</sup>but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings. <sup>7</sup>Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf’s foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze. <sup>8</sup>Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: <sup>9</sup>their wings touched one another. Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went. <sup>10</sup>As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle. <sup>11</sup>Such were their faces. And their wings were spread out above. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies. <sup>12</sup>And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would

go, they went, without turning as they went. <sup>13</sup>As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. <sup>14</sup>And the living creatures darted to and fro, like the appearance of a flash of lightning. . . .

<sup>22</sup>Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads. <sup>23</sup>And under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body. <sup>24</sup>And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings. <sup>25</sup>And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads. When they stood still, they let down their wings.

<sup>26</sup>And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. <sup>27</sup>And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. <sup>28</sup>Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around.

Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I

fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

*Additional Reading: Habakkuk 1:1–3:19*

## **New Testament Reading: Romans 1:1–17**

### Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup>concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup>and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup>through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, <sup>6</sup>including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup>To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Longing to Go to Rome

<sup>8</sup>First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. <sup>9</sup>For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you <sup>10</sup>always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. <sup>11</sup>For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—<sup>12</sup>that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. <sup>13</sup>I want you to know, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in

order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. <sup>14</sup>I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. <sup>15</sup>So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith

<sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

**Writing**

There remains, therefore, the doctrine of the Gospel, which instructs us concerning the twofold benefit of Christ, namely, reconciliation and sanctification or renewal. It contains the promise of the remission of sins, free reconciliation, adoption, and acceptance unto eternal life, for the sake of Christ the Mediator. It also contains the promise of the Spirit of renewal, who works in us both to will and to do, so that after we are justified we can also begin the new obedience. Therefore, because justifying faith seeks reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, adoption, and acceptance unto eternal life, it is manifest what the proper and principal object of faith is, namely, the promise of grace for the sake of the Mediator. In respect to this and by laying hold on it we are justified.

These things are confirmed by sure and clear passages of Scripture which establish that the object of justifying faith is not the Word of God in general, but the promise of the benefits of Christ the Mediator. . . .

Then how many blessings come to us along with this object of our faith: free reconciliation, remission of sins, imputation of the righteousness of Christ, free acceptance before God, adoption, freedom from the law of sin and the Law, liberation from the curse of the Law, propitiation for our sins, salvation, eternal life, communion with God, the inheritance of life and salvation, peace, joy, and hope of the glory of God! These are the words of Scripture. When in this way the object of justifying faith is unfolded before us, the entire matter becomes clearer.

There must be a continuous progression from Sinai to Zion, so that the object of justifying faith does not become Epicureanism or, as Peter says, “a cloak for maliciousness” (1 Peter 2:16).

—Martin Chemnitz

**Hymnody**

It is the pow’r of God to save  
From sin and Satan and the grave;  
It works the faith which firmly clings  
To all the treasures which it brings.

—The Gospel Shows the Father’s Grace  
(LSB 580:4)

**Prayer of the Day**

Heavenly Father, though we do not deserve Your goodness, still You provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may acknowledge Your gifts, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B69)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism II 34–46

### 8 JANUARY

#### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God,\*  
and the sky above proclaims  
his | handiwork.
- <sup>2</sup>Day to day | pours out speech,\*  
and night to night reveals | knowledge.
- <sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor | are there words,\*  
whose voice | is not heard.
- <sup>4</sup>Their measuring line goes out through  
all the earth, and their words  
to the end | of the world.\*  
In them he has set a tent | for the sun,
- <sup>5</sup>which comes out like a bridegroom leaving  
his | chamber,\*  
and, like a strong man,  
runs its | course with joy.
- <sup>6</sup>Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
and its circuit to the | end of them,\*  
and there is nothing hidden | from  
its heat.
- <sup>9</sup>the fear of the LORD is clean,  
enduring for- | ever,\*  
the just decrees of the LORD are true,  
and righteous alto- | gether.
- <sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold,  
even | much fine gold,\*  
sweeter also than honey  
and drippings of the | honeycomb.
- <sup>11</sup>Moreover, by them is your | servant  
warned,\*  
in keeping them there is | great reward.

<sup>14</sup>Let the words of my mouth and the  
meditation of my heart be acceptable | in  
your sight,\*

O LORD, my rock and my re- | deemer.

—Psalm 19:1–6, 9–11, 14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 100*

#### Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 2:1–3:11

Ezekiel's Call

<sup>1</sup>And he said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.”  
<sup>2</sup>And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. <sup>3</sup>And he said to me, “Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day. <sup>4</sup>The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD.’ <sup>5</sup>And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them. <sup>6</sup>And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. <sup>7</sup>And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.  
<sup>8</sup>“But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Be not rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.” <sup>9</sup>And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched out to me, and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. <sup>10</sup>And he spread it before me. And it had writing on the front and on

the back, and there were written on it words of lamentation and mourning and woe.

<sup>3:1</sup>And he said to me, “Son of man, eat whatever you find here. Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.” <sup>2</sup>So I opened my mouth, and he gave me this scroll to eat. <sup>3</sup>And he said to me, “Son of man, feed your belly with this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it.” Then I ate it, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.

<sup>4</sup>And he said to me, “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them. <sup>5</sup>For you are not sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language, but to the house of Israel—<sup>6</sup>not to many peoples of foreign speech and a hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I sent you to such, they would listen to you. <sup>7</sup>But the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me: because all the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart. <sup>8</sup>Behold, I have made your face as hard as their faces, and your forehead as hard as their foreheads. <sup>9</sup>Like emery harder than flint have I made your forehead. Fear them not, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house.” <sup>10</sup>Moreover, he said to me, “Son of man, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart, and hear with your ears. <sup>11</sup>And go to the exiles, to your people, and speak to them and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,’ whether they hear or refuse to hear.”

### **New Testament Reading: Romans 1:18–32**

God’s Wrath on Unrighteousness

<sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their

unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup>For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup>For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup>For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup>Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup>and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

<sup>24</sup>Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup>because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

<sup>26</sup>For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup>and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

<sup>32:8</sup>And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup>They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup>slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

<sup>31</sup>foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

<sup>32</sup>Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

## Writing

Merely preaching the Law, without Christ, either makes proud people, who imagine that they can fulfill the Law by outward works, or forces them utterly to despair. Therefore, Christ takes the Law into His hands and explains it spiritually (Matthew 5:21–48; Romans 7:14; 1:18). He reveals His wrath from heaven on all sinners and shows how great it is. In this teaching sinners are directed to the Law, and from it they first learn to know their sins correctly—a confession that Moses could never wrestle out of them. For as the apostle testifies (2 Corinthians 3:14–15), even though Moses is read, the veil he put over his face is never lifted. So they cannot understand the Law spiritually, and what great things it requires of us, and how severely it curses and condemns us because we cannot keep or fulfill it. “But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed” (2 Corinthians 3:16).

Christ's Spirit must not only comfort, but also through the office of the Law “convict the world concerning sin” [John 16:8]. In the New Testament, as the prophet says, He must do the work of another (reprove), in order that He may <afterward> do His own work, which is to comfort and to preach grace [Isaiah 28:21]. To this end the Spirit was obtained for us through Christ and sent.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord V 10–11

## Hymnody

But those who scornfully disdain  
God's Law shall then in sin remain;  
Its terror in their ear resounds  
And keeps their wickedness in bounds.

—The Law of God Is Good and Wise  
(LSB 579:4)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of Your people who call upon You and grant that they both perceive and know what things they ought to do and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L13)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism II 47–54

## 9 JANUARY

## Psalmody

<sup>5</sup> For God alone, O my soul, wait in | silence,\*  
for my hope is | from him.

<sup>6</sup> He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my | fortress;\*  
I shall not be | shaken.

<sup>7</sup> On God rests my salvation and my | glory,\*  
my mighty rock, my refuge | is God.

<sup>8</sup> Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart be- | fore him,\*  
God is a refuge | for us.

<sup>9</sup> Those of low estate are but a breath; those  
of high estate are a de- | lusion;\*  
in the balances they go up; they are  
together lighter | than a breath.

<sup>10</sup>Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on | robbery;\*  
if riches increase,  
set not your | heart on them.

<sup>11</sup>Once God has spoken;  
twice have I | heard this:\*  
that power belongs to God, <sup>12</sup>and that to  
you, O Lord, belongs | steadfast love.

For you will render | to a man\*  
according | to his work.  
—Psalm 62:5–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 32*

### Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 3:12–27

[Ezekiel's Call]

<sup>12</sup>Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great earthquake: “Blessed be the glory of the LORD from its place!” <sup>13</sup>It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them, and the sound of a great earthquake. <sup>14</sup>The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the LORD being strong upon me. <sup>15</sup>And I came to the exiles at Tel-abib, who were dwelling by the Chebar canal, and I sat where they were dwelling. And I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days.

A Watchman for Israel

<sup>16</sup>And at the end of seven days, the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>17</sup>“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>18</sup>If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I

will require at your hand. <sup>19</sup>But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. <sup>20</sup>Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>21</sup>But if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning, and you will have delivered your soul.”

<sup>22</sup>And the hand of the LORD was upon me there. And he said to me, “Arise, go out into the valley, and there I will speak with you.” <sup>23</sup>So I arose and went out into the valley, and behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, like the glory that I had seen by the Chebar canal, and I fell on my face. <sup>24</sup>But the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and he spoke with me and said to me, “Go, shut yourself within your house. <sup>25</sup>And you, O son of man, behold, cords will be placed upon you, and you shall be bound with them, so that you cannot go out among the people. <sup>26</sup>And I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be mute and unable to reprove them, for they are a rebellious house. <sup>27</sup>But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD.’ He who will hear, let him hear; and he who will refuse to hear, let him refuse, for they are a rebellious house.”

*Additional Reading: Ezekiel 4:1–11:25*

**New Testament Reading: Romans 2:1–16**

## God's Righteous Judgment

<sup>1</sup>Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. <sup>2</sup>We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. <sup>3</sup>Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup>Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? <sup>5</sup>But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

<sup>6</sup>He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup>to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup>but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. <sup>9</sup>There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, <sup>10</sup>but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. <sup>11</sup>For God shows no partiality.

## God's Judgment and the Law

<sup>12</sup>For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup>For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. <sup>14</sup>For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a

law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup>They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them <sup>16</sup>on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup>For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup>For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. <sup>14</sup>For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup>They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them <sup>16</sup>on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

**Writing**

[How to prepare for death:] First, one must admonish the people to attend church and listen to the sermon so that they learn through God's word how to live and how to die. It must be noted that those who are so uncouth and wicked as to despise God's word while they are in good health should be left unattended when they are sick unless they demonstrate their remorse and repentance with great earnestness, tears, and lamentation. . . . Second, everyone should prepare in time and get ready for death by going to confession and taking the sacrament once every week or fortnight. He should

become reconciled with his neighbor and make his will so that if the Lord knocks and he departs before a pastor or chaplain can arrive, he has provided for his soul, has left nothing undone, and has committed himself to God. When there are many fatalities and only two or three pastors on duty, it is impossible to visit everyone, to give instruction, and to teach each one what a Christian ought to know in the anguish of death. Those who have been careless and negligent in these matters must account for themselves. That is their own fault. After all, we cannot set up a private pulpit and altar daily at their bedside simply because they have despised the public pulpit and altar to which God has summoned and called them.

Third, if someone wants the chaplain or pastor to come, let the sick person send word in time to call him and let him do so early enough while he is still in his right mind before the illness overwhelms the patient.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

The Law is good; but since the fall  
Its holiness condemns us all;  
It dooms us for our sin to die  
And has no pow'r to justify.

—The Law of God Is Good and Wise  
(LSB 579:5)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, graciously hear the prayers of Your people that we who justly suffer the consequence of our sin may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness to the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L18)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism II 55–62

### 10 JANUARY

*Basil the Great of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa, Pastors and Confessors*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> LORD, you were favorable | to your land;\*  
you restored the fortunes of | Jacob.
  - <sup>2</sup> You forgave the iniquity of your | people;\*  
you covered | all their sin.
  - <sup>3</sup> You withdrew | all your wrath;\*  
you turned from your hot | anger.
  - <sup>4</sup> Restore us again, O God of our sal- |  
vation,\*  
and put away your indignation | toward  
us!
  - <sup>7</sup> Show us your steadfast love, | O LORD,\*  
and grant us your sal- | vation.
  - <sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the | LORD will speak,\*  
for he will speak peace to his people,  
to his saints; but let them not turn back  
to | folly.
  - <sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faith- | fulness meet;\*  
righteousness and peace kiss each | other.
  - <sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs up | from the ground,\*  
and righteousness looks down | from  
the sky.
  - <sup>12</sup> Yes, the LORD will give | what is good,\*  
and our land will yield its | increase.
  - <sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go be- | fore him\*  
and make his foot- | steps a way.
- Psalm 85:1–4, 7–8, 10–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 58*

## Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 18:1–4, 19–32

The Soul Who Sins Shall Die

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to me:  
<sup>2</sup>“What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? <sup>3</sup>As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. <sup>4</sup>Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die. . . .

<sup>19</sup>“Yet you say, ‘Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?’ When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. <sup>20</sup>The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

<sup>21</sup>“But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. <sup>22</sup>None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. <sup>23</sup>Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? <sup>24</sup>But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die.

<sup>25</sup>“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? <sup>26</sup>When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. <sup>27</sup>Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. <sup>28</sup>Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. <sup>29</sup>Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

<sup>30</sup>“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. <sup>31</sup>Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup>For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.”

*Additional Reading: Ezekiel 19:1–24:27*

## New Testament Reading: Romans 2:17–29

[God’s Judgment and the Law]

<sup>17</sup>But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God <sup>18</sup>and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; <sup>19</sup>and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, <sup>20</sup>an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment

of knowledge and truth—<sup>21</sup>you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? <sup>22</sup>You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup>You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. <sup>24</sup>For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

<sup>25</sup>For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. <sup>26</sup>So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? <sup>27</sup>Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. <sup>28</sup>For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. <sup>29</sup>But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

## Writing

Furthermore, the slave and the hireling have a law, not from the Lord, but of their own contriving; the one does not love God, the other loves something else more than God. . . . Each man is a law unto himself, when he sets up his will against the universal law, perversely striving to rival his Creator, to be wholly independent, making his will his only law. What a heavy and burdensome yoke upon all the sons of Adam, bowing down our necks, so that our life draws near to hell. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24).

In this life, I think, we cannot fully and perfectly obey that precept, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind” (Luke 10:27). For here the heart must take thought for the body; and the soul must energize the flesh; and the strength must guard itself from impairment. . . . It is therefore impossible to offer up all our being to God, to yearn altogether for His face, so long as we must accommodate our purposes and aspirations to these fragile, sickly bodies of ours. Wherefore the soul may hope to possess the fourth degree of love, or rather to be possessed by it, only when it has been clothed with that spiritual and immortal body, which will be perfect, peaceful, lovely, and in everything wholly subjected to the spirit. And to this degree no human effort can attain: it is in God’s power to give it to whom He wills. Then the soul will easily reach that highest stage, because no lusts of the flesh will retard its eager entrance into the joy of its Lord, and no troubles will disturb its peace.

—Bernard of Clairvaux

## Hymnody

You have this Law to see therein  
That you have not been free from sin  
But also that you clearly see  
How pure toward God life should be.  
Have mercy, Lord!

—These Are the Holy Ten Commands  
(LSB 581:11)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You revealed to Your Church Your eternal being of glorious majesty and perfect love as one God in a Trinity of persons. May Your Church, with

bishops like Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa, receive grace to continue steadfast in the confession of the true faith and constant in our worship of You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who live and reign, now and forever. (1135)

### **Basil the Great of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa**

Basil and the two Gregorays, collectively known as the Cappadocian Fathers, were leaders of Christian orthodoxy in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) in the later fourth century. Basil and Gregory of Nyssa were brothers; Gregory of Nazianzus was their friend. All three were influential in shaping the theology ratified by the Council of Constantinople in AD 381, which is expressed in the Nicene Creed. Their defense of the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and Holy Trinity, together with their contributions to the liturgy of the Eastern Church, make them among the most influential Christian teachers and theologians of their time.

### **Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Large Catechism II 63–70

## **11 JANUARY**

### **Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup>O LORD my God, in you do I take | refuge;\*  
save me from all my pursuers  
and de- | liver me,  
<sup>2</sup>lest like a lion they tear my | soul apart,\*  
rending it in pieces,  
with none to de- | liver.

- <sup>3</sup>O LORD my God, if I have | done this,\*  
if there is wrong | in my hands,  
<sup>4</sup>if I have repaid my friend with | evil\*  
or plundered my enemy with- | out cause,  
<sup>5</sup>let the enemy pursue my soul  
and over- | take it,\*  
and let him trample my life to the  
ground and lay my glory | in the dust.  
<sup>8</sup>The LORD judges the | peoples;\*  
judge me, O LORD, according  
to my righteousness and according  
to the integrity that is | in me.  
<sup>9</sup>Oh, let the evil of the wicked come  
to an end, and may you establish  
the | righteous—\*  
you who test the minds and hearts,  
O | righteous God!  
<sup>10</sup>My shield | is with God,\*  
who saves the up- | right in heart.  
<sup>11</sup>God is a | righteous judge,\*  
and a God who feels  
indignation | ev'ry day.  
—Psalm 7:1–5, 8–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 14*

### **Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 33:1–20**

Ezekiel Is Israel's Watchman

- <sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to me:  
<sup>2</sup>“Son of man, speak to your people and say  
to them, If I bring the sword upon a land,  
and the people of the land take a man from  
among them, and make him their watchman,  
<sup>3</sup>and if he sees the sword coming upon the  
land and blows the trumpet and warns the  
people, <sup>4</sup>then if anyone who hears the sound  
of the trumpet does not take warning, and  
the sword comes and takes him away, his  
blood shall be upon his own head. <sup>5</sup>He heard  
the sound of the trumpet and did not take  
warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But

if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. <sup>6</sup>But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.

<sup>7</sup>“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>8</sup>If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

Why Will You Die, Israel?

<sup>10</sup>“And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: ‘Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?’ <sup>11</sup>Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

<sup>12</sup>“And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins. <sup>13</sup>Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered,

but in his injustice that he has done he shall die. <sup>14</sup>Again, though I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, <sup>15</sup>if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. <sup>16</sup>None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.

<sup>17</sup>“Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just,’ when it is their own way that is not just. <sup>18</sup>When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it. <sup>19</sup>And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he shall live by this. <sup>20</sup>Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways.”

## New Testament Reading: Romans 3:1–18

God's Righteousness Upheld

<sup>1</sup>Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? <sup>2</sup>Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. <sup>3</sup>What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? <sup>4</sup>By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written,

“That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.”

<sup>5</sup>But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) <sup>6</sup>By no means! For then how could God judge the world? <sup>7</sup>But if through my lie God's truth abounds

to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? <sup>8</sup>And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.

No One Is Righteous

<sup>9</sup>What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, <sup>10</sup>as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one;

<sup>11</sup>no one understands;

no one seeks for God.

<sup>12</sup>All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;

no one does good,

not even one.”

<sup>13</sup>“Their throat is an open grave;

they use their tongues to deceive.”

“The venom of asps is under their lips.”

<sup>14</sup>“Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”

<sup>15</sup>“Their feet are swift to shed blood;

<sup>16</sup>in their paths are ruin and misery,

<sup>17</sup>and the way of peace they have not known.”

<sup>18</sup>“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

## Writing

2. We believe, teach, and confess that this distinction [between man’s nature and original sin] should be maintained with the greatest care. For this doctrine (that no distinction is to be made between our corrupt human nature and original sin) conflicts with the chief articles of our Christian faith about creation, redemption, sanctification, and the resurrection of our body. It cannot stand with them.

God created the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the fall. But He also created our bodies and souls after the fall. Even though they are corrupt, God still acknowledges them as His work, as it is written in Job 10:8, “Your hands fashioned and made me.” (See also Deuteronomy 32:18; Isaiah 45:9–10; 54:5; 64:8; Acts 17:28; Psalm 100:3; 139:14; Ecclesiastes 12:1.) . . .

3. On the other hand, we believe, teach, and confess that original sin is not a minor corruption. It is so deep a corruption of human nature that nothing healthy or uncorrupt remains in man’s body or soul, in his inward or outward powers (Romans 3:10–12). As the Church sings:

Through Adam’s fall is all corrupt,  
Nature and essence human.

This damage cannot be fully described [Psalm 19:12]. It cannot be understood by reason, but only from God’s Word. We affirm that no one but God alone can separate human nature and this corruption of human nature from each other. This will fully come to pass through death, in the ‹blessed› resurrection. At that time our nature, which we now bear, will rise and live eternally without original sin and be separated and divided from it. As it is written in Job 19:26–27, “After my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold.”

—Epitome of the Formula  
of Concord I 3–4, 8–10

## Hymnody

All mankind fell in Adam's fall;  
 One common sin infects us all.  
 From one to all the curse descends,  
 And over all God's wrath impends.  
 —All Mankind Fell in Adam's Fall  
 (LSB 562:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, the protector of all who trust in You, have mercy on us that with You as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (A82)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism III 1–13

## 12 JANUARY

## Psalmody

- <sup>3</sup> Because your steadfast love is bet- | ter than life,\*  
 my lips will | praise you.
- <sup>4</sup> So I will bless you as long | as I live;\*  
 in your name I will lift | up my hands.
- <sup>5</sup> My soul will be satisfied  
 as with fat and | rich food,\*  
 and my mouth will praise you  
 with | joyful lips,
- <sup>6</sup> when I remember you up- | on my bed,\*  
 and meditate on you in the watches | of  
 the night;
- <sup>7</sup> for you have | been my help,\*  
 and in the shadow of your wings  
 I will | sing for joy.

- <sup>8</sup> My soul | clings to you;\*  
 your right hand up- | holds me.
- <sup>9</sup> But those who seek to de- | stroy my life\*  
 shall go down into the depths | of  
 the earth;
- <sup>10</sup> they shall be given over  
 to the power | of the sword;\*  
 they shall be a portion for | jackals.
- <sup>11</sup> But the king shall re- | joice in God;\*  
 all who swear by him shall exult,  
 for the mouths of liars | will be stopped.  
 —Psalm 63:3–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 59*

## Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 34:1–24

Prophecy Against the Shepherds of Israel

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? <sup>3</sup>You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. <sup>4</sup>The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. <sup>5</sup>So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. <sup>6</sup>My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.

<sup>7</sup>“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: <sup>8</sup>As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely because my sheep have

become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep, <sup>9</sup>therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: <sup>10</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.

The Lord GOD Will Seek Them Out

<sup>11</sup>“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

<sup>17</sup>“As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. <sup>18</sup>Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? <sup>19</sup>And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

<sup>20</sup>“Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup>I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. <sup>23</sup>And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.”

### New Testament Reading: Romans 3:19–31

[No One Is Righteous]

<sup>19</sup>Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup>For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

The Righteousness of God Through Faith

<sup>21</sup>But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to

it—<sup>22</sup>the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup>It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup>Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup>For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. <sup>29</sup>Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup>since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. <sup>31</sup>Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

## Writing

You desire to go to Confession and to the Holy Lord’s Supper and ask: “How should I begin? How might God look upon my works favorably so that I will be blessed? So that I will receive the body and blood of the Lord not to my judgment, but to my soul’s salvation?” Listen to the answer which the apostle Paul gives in 1 Cor. 11:28: “A man,” he says, “ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.” But you ask, “How should I examine myself? What do I examine myself for?” The apostle holds the Law before your eyes and says to you: “From the Law comes recognition of sin!” Therefore look into the Law, in this

mirror of the Law, and compare the purity of the Law with the purity—rather, the impurity—of your heart and changes so that you will receive the first grace, namely, recognition of your sins. But because the blind man can recognize neither what is beautiful nor what is ugly, he calls upon the Lord, “Have mercy upon me!” Because human beings according to their nature cannot correctly recognize their sins, you should turn to the Father of light, from whom all good and perfect gifts come from above, and to the Son, who is that Light, who enlightens all humans, and pray. . . .

Lord God, Holy Spirit, You are the true and constant support in every need, a Spirit of truth and promise, God’s finger, the water of life, a heavenly fire, which warms cold hearts and ignites them with true love for God. You have revealed Yourself to the apostles with wonderful gifts in a powerful wind and fiery tongues. We ask You now therefore to come into our hearts, to strengthen and gladden our ignorant consciences. Sanctify us with Your blessing and be unto us the holy assurance of our redemption and our salvation. Amen.

—Wilhelm Loehe

## Hymnody

The Lord, my God, be praised,  
My trust, my life from heaven,  
The Father’s own dear Son,  
Whose life for me was given,  
Who for my sin atoned  
With His most precious blood  
And gives to me by faith  
The highest heav’nly good.

—The Lord, My God, Be Praised  
(LSB 794:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and most merciful God, the protector of all who trust in You, strengthen our faith and give us courage to believe that in Your love You will rescue us from all adversities; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B70)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism III 14–24

## 13 JANUARY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Blessèd is the one whose transgression is for- | given,\*  
whose sin is | covered.

<sup>2</sup> Blessèd is the man against whom the Lord counts no in- | iquity,\*  
and in whose spirit there is | no deceit.

<sup>3</sup> For when I kept silent,  
my bones wast- | ed away\*  
through my groaning | all day long.

<sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy up- | on me;\*  
my strength was dried up  
as by the heat of | summer.

<sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not cover my in- | iquity;\*  
I said, “I will confess my transgressions  
to the LORD,” and you forgave  
the iniquity | of my sin.

<sup>6</sup> Therefore let everyone who is godly offer  
prayer to you at a time  
when you | may be found,\*  
surely in the rush of great waters,  
they shall not | reach him.

<sup>7</sup> You are a hiding place for me;  
you preserve me from | trouble;\*  
you surround me with shouts  
of de- | liverance.  
—Psalm 32:1–7

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 51*

### Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 36:13–28

[Prophecy to the Mountains of Israel]

<sup>13</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD: Because they say to you, ‘You devour people, and you bereave your nation of children,’<sup>14</sup>therefore you shall no longer devour people and no longer bereave your nation of children, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>15</sup>And I will not let you hear anymore the reproach of the nations, and you shall no longer bear the disgrace of the peoples and no longer cause your nation to stumble, declares the Lord GOD.”

The LORD’s Concern for His Holy Name

<sup>16</sup>The word of the LORD came to me:  
<sup>17</sup>“Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity. <sup>18</sup>So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. <sup>19</sup>I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them. <sup>20</sup>But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, ‘These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.’ <sup>21</sup>But I had concern for my holy

name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.

I Will Put My Spirit Within You

<sup>22</sup>“Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. <sup>23</sup>And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. <sup>24</sup>I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup>I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup>And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. <sup>28</sup>You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

### New Testament Reading: Romans 4:1–25

Abraham Justified by Faith

<sup>1</sup>What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup>For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” <sup>4</sup>Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as

a gift but as his due. <sup>5</sup>And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, <sup>6</sup>just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

<sup>7</sup>“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,

and whose sins are covered;

<sup>8</sup>blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”

<sup>9</sup>Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. <sup>10</sup>How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. <sup>11</sup>He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, <sup>12</sup>and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

The Promise Realized Through Faith

<sup>13</sup>For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

<sup>16</sup>That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be

guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,<sup>17</sup> as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.<sup>18</sup> In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.”<sup>19</sup> He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb.<sup>20</sup> No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,<sup>21</sup> fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.<sup>22</sup> That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”<sup>23</sup> But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone,<sup>24</sup> but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,<sup>25</sup> who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

## Writing

Here [Philippians 3:7–11] Paul clearly explains the righteousness of faith and what it consists of: that God looks at His Son and for His sake permits us not to suffer for our sins; Instead, He regards us as righteous, as if we were neither sinners nor corrupted by nature. He looks at the power of Christ’s resurrection and our sharing of His suffering, for Christ’s suffering and death are our death, and we become like Him through faith; we enjoy the power of His resurrection.

Similarly he writes in Romans 4:(25): “He was put to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.” That means: As soon as Christ rose from the dead, the power of His resurrection was so great that whoever believed on Him was no longer considered a sinner but was considered righteous in God’s sight—for he had put on the obedience of Christ, which He rendered the Father even unto death. It is written (Gal. 3:27): “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Again (Col. 2:12–14): “You were buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith, which God effects, God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, who were dead in sin, God made alive with Him, having forgiven us all our sins, having canceled the bond which stood against us.”

From all this it is plain and clear that when Holy Scripture speaks of the righteousness of faith and of our justification in God’s sight, nothing else can be understood but this: (1) how we are declared utterly free in God’s sight of our sins, which we have committed, which still cling to our flesh, which we cannot completely lay aside as long as we live in this world; and (2) what God looks upon and why He will not regard us as sinners and does not cast us away and condemn us eternally as sinful, disobedient children: because of the obedience of Christ, which He rendered to His Father even unto death as the satisfaction and payment for our sins and as our righteousness.

—Jacob Andreae

## Hymnody

Thy work alone, O Christ,  
 Can ease this weight of sin;  
 Thy blood alone, O Lamb of God,  
 Can give me peace within.

—Not What These Hands Have Done  
 (LSB 567:3)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L17)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism III 25–34

## 14 JANUARY

## Psalmody

<sup>27</sup> These all | look to you,\*  
 to give them their food in due | season.

<sup>28</sup> When you give it to them,  
 they gath- | er it up;\*  
 when you open your hand,  
 they are filled with | good things.

<sup>29</sup> When you hide your face,  
 they | are dismayed;\*  
 when you take away their breath,  
 they die and return | to their dust.

<sup>30</sup> When you send forth your Spirit,  
 they are cre- | ated,\*  
 and you renew the face | of the ground.  
 —Psalm 104:27–30

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 79*

## Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 36:33–37:14

[I Will Put My Spirit Within You]

<sup>33</sup>“Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. <sup>34</sup>And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. <sup>35</sup>And they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’<sup>36</sup>Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it.

<sup>37</sup>“Thus says the Lord GOD: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock. <sup>38</sup>Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

The Valley of Dry Bones

<sup>37:1</sup>The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup>And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. <sup>3</sup>And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” <sup>4</sup>Then he said to me, “Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word

of the LORD. <sup>5</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup>And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

<sup>7</sup>So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup>And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them.

<sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” <sup>10</sup>So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

<sup>11</sup>Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ <sup>12</sup>Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup>And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup>And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

## New Testament Reading: Romans 5:1–21

Peace with God Through Faith

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup>Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

<sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—<sup>8</sup>but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—<sup>13</sup>for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. <sup>14</sup>Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the

transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

<sup>15</sup>But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. <sup>16</sup>And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. <sup>17</sup>For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup>Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup>For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup>Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup>so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Writing

There is a natural Law written in our hearts [as] the apostle [Paul] . . . teaches us when he writes that, for the most part, "the Gentiles, which do not have the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, and, though they have not read the Law, still have the works of the Law written in their hearts" [Romans 2:14–15]. Adam broke this Law . . . [and] incurred guilt and through arrogance fell into transgression. Had he

not thus violated his allegiance, but been obedient to the commands of heaven, he would have preserved to his posterity the prerogative of nature and the innocence that he possessed at his birth. Therefore, as by [Adam's] disobedience the authority of the law of nature was corrupted and blotted out, the written Law was found necessary.

The [written] Law, then, was published, first, to take away all excuse, lest man should say, "I did not know sin, because I received no rule what to avoid." And next, that "all the world might become guilty before God" by the recognition of sin [Romans 3:19]. Now the world becomes guilty before God by the Law, in that all are made liable to its precepts, but no man is justified by its works. By the Law comes the knowledge of sin, but not the remission of guilt.

But when the Lord Jesus came, He forgave all men that sin which none could escape and "blotted out the handwriting against us" by the shedding of His own blood [Colossians 2:14]. This, then, is the apostle's meaning: sin abounded by the Law, but grace abounded by Jesus; for after the whole world became guilty, He took away the sin of the whole world, as John bore witness, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" [John 1:29]. Therefore let no one glory in works, for by his works no man shall be justified, for he who is just has a free gift, for he is justified by the Bath [of Baptism]. It is faith, then, which delivers by the blood of Christ, for "Blessed is the man to whom sin is remitted and pardon granted" [Psalm 32:1].

—Ambrose of Milan

## Hymnody

But Christ, the second Adam, came  
 To bear our sin and woe and shame,  
 To be our life, our light, our way,  
 Our only hope, our only stay.  
 —All Mankind Fell in Adam’s Fall  
 (LSB 562:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, Your Son,  
 Jesus Christ, our Lord, died for the ungodly,  
 declaring all of humanity righteous by the  
 shedding of His blood. Grant us the free  
 gift of faith to receive this reality for our  
 salvation, that by Your grace we may serve  
 You in love and righteousness all the days of  
 our lives; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our  
 Lord. (1136)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism III 35–48

## 15 JANUARY

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly | beings,\*  
 ascribe to the LORD glo- | ry  
 and strength.
- <sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the LORD the glory | due  
 his name;\*  
 worship the LORD  
 in the splendor of | holiness.
- <sup>3</sup> The voice of the LORD is over the | waters;\*  
 the God of glory thunders, the LORD,  
 over many | waters.
- <sup>4</sup> The voice of the LORD is | powerful;\*  
 the voice of the LORD is full of | majesty.

- <sup>8</sup> The voice of the LORD shakes  
 the | wilderness;\*  
 the LORD shakes the wilderness | of  
 Kadesh.
- <sup>9</sup> The voice of the LORD makes the deer  
 give birth and strips the | forests bare,\*  
 and in his temple all cry, | “Glory!”
- <sup>10</sup> The LORD sits enthroned o- | ver the flood;\*  
 the LORD sits enthroned  
 as king for- | ever.
- <sup>11</sup> May the LORD give strength to his | people!\*  
 May the LORD bless his people | with  
 peace!  
 —Psalm 29:1–4a, 8–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 29*

## Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 37:15–28

I Will Be Their God, They Shall Be My People

<sup>15</sup>The word of the LORD came to me:  
<sup>16</sup>“Son of man, take a stick and write on it,  
 ‘For Judah, and the people of Israel associated  
 with him’; then take another stick and write  
 on it, ‘For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim)  
 and all the house of Israel associated with  
 him.’ <sup>17</sup>And join them one to another into  
 one stick, that they may become one in  
 your hand. <sup>18</sup>And when your people say to  
 you, ‘Will you not tell us what you mean  
 by these?’ <sup>19</sup>say to them, Thus says the Lord  
 GOD: Behold, I am about to take the stick of  
 Joseph (that is in the hand of Ephraim) and  
 the tribes of Israel associated with him. And I  
 will join with it the stick of Judah, and make  
 them one stick, that they may be one in my  
 hand. <sup>20</sup>When the sticks on which you write  
 are in your hand before their eyes, <sup>21</sup>then say  
 to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I  
 will take the people of Israel from the nations  
 among which they have gone, and will gather  
 them from all around, and bring them to

their own land. <sup>22</sup>And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms.

<sup>23</sup>They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

<sup>24</sup>“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. <sup>25</sup>They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. <sup>26</sup>I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. <sup>27</sup>My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>28</sup>Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”

### New Testament Reading: Romans 6:1–23

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

<sup>1</sup>What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup>By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in

order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup>For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup>For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup>Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup>We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup>For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup>So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup>Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup>Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. <sup>14</sup>For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Slaves to Righteousness

<sup>15</sup>What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? <sup>17</sup>But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were

committed,<sup>18</sup> and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.<sup>19</sup> I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

<sup>20</sup>For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.<sup>21</sup> But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.<sup>22</sup> But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Writing

God made man upright according to the soul, and not according to the earthly matter. For he created him in his own image and likeness. You should know, therefore, that you ought to restore and keep the likeness of God in the spiritual part of your being, and not in the mortal clay of your body. For God is spirit, and those who wish to become or remain like him must deal with this matter in spirit and in their hearts. Yet God gave man an upright posture in order that the corporeal straightness of the exterior and less worthy figure might be a warning to the inward man, who was made in the image of God, that he should keep his spiritual straightness; and thus the splendor of the body might rebuke the deformity of the soul. In fact, what would be more unbecoming in

man than to carry his soul bent down while his body is erect? It would be a perverse and ugly thing indeed, a thing befitting only the clay out of which the body was made, to have the eyes looking upwards and with them to look freely at the sky above and be delighted with the lights of the heavens, while the spiritual and celestial creature, that is, the spiritual part of man, turns its eyes in the opposite direction, as it actually does when the inward feelings and affections of man are bent downwards towards the earth.

—Bernard of Clairvaux

## Hymnody

Baptized into Your name most holy,  
O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
I claim a place, though weak and lowly,  
Among Your saints, Your chosen host.  
Buried with Christ and dead to sin,  
Your Spirit now shall live within.

—Baptized into Your Name Most Holy  
(*LSB* 590:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, mercifully hear our prayers and having set us free from the bonds of our sins deliver us from every evil; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L20)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism III 49–58

16 JANUARY

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup>Transgression speaks to the wicked deep | in his heart;\*

there is no fear of God be- | fore his eyes.

<sup>2</sup>For he flatters himself in | his own eyes\* that his iniquity cannot be found out and | hated.

<sup>3</sup>The words of his mouth are trouble | and deceit;\*

he has ceased to act wisely | and do good.

<sup>4</sup>He plots trouble while | on his bed;\* he sets himself in a way that is not good; he does not reject | evil.

<sup>5</sup>Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the | heavens,\* your faithfulness | to the clouds.

<sup>6</sup>Your righteousness is like the moun- | tains of God;\* your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, | O LORD.

<sup>10</sup>Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who | know you,\* and your righteousness to the up- | right of heart!

—Psalm 36:1–6, 10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 54*

**Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 38:1–23**

Prophecy Against Gog

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>“Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him <sup>3</sup>and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. <sup>4</sup>And I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen,

all of them clothed in full armor, a great host, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords. <sup>5</sup>Persia, Cush, and Put are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; <sup>6</sup>Gomer and all his hordes; Beth-togarmah from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes—many peoples are with you.

<sup>7</sup>“Be ready and keep ready, you and all your hosts that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. <sup>8</sup>After many days you will be mustered. In the latter years you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste. Its people were brought out from the peoples and now dwell securely, all of them. <sup>9</sup>You will advance, coming on like a storm. You will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many peoples with you.

<sup>10</sup>“Thus says the Lord GOD: On that day, thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme <sup>11</sup>and say, ‘I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates,’ <sup>12</sup>to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth. <sup>13</sup>Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all its leaders will say to you, ‘Have you come to seize spoil? Have you assembled your hosts to carry off plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to seize great spoil?’

<sup>14</sup>“Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord GOD: On

that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, will you not know it? <sup>15</sup>You will come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army. <sup>16</sup>You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

<sup>17</sup>“Thus says the Lord GOD: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them? <sup>18</sup>But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord GOD, my wrath will be roused in my anger. <sup>19</sup>For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. <sup>20</sup>The fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. <sup>21</sup>I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord GOD. Every man’s sword will be against his brother. <sup>22</sup>With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur. <sup>23</sup>So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

## New Testament Reading: Romans 7:1–20

Released from the Law

<sup>1</sup>Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? <sup>2</sup>For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. <sup>3</sup>Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

<sup>4</sup>Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. <sup>5</sup>For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. <sup>6</sup>But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

The Law and Sin

<sup>7</sup>What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” <sup>8</sup>But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. <sup>9</sup>I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. <sup>10</sup>The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. <sup>11</sup>For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through

it killed me. <sup>12</sup>So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

<sup>13</sup>Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. <sup>14</sup>For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup>For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. <sup>17</sup>So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup>For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. <sup>19</sup>For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

## Writing

What need is there of a long discussion? All Scripture, all the Church cries out that the Law cannot be satisfied. Therefore, starting to fulfill the Law does not please on its own account, but on account of faith in Christ. Otherwise, the Law always accuses us. For who loves or fears God enough? Who has enough patience to bear the troubles brought by God? Who does not frequently doubt whether human affairs are ruled by God's counsel or by chance? Who does not frequently doubt whether he is heard by God? Who is not frequently enraged because the wicked enjoy a better life than the righteous, because the righteous are

oppressed by the wicked? Who fulfills his own calling? Who loves his neighbor as himself? Who is not tempted by lust? Paul says, "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing" (Romans 7:19). Likewise, "I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin" (7:25). Here he openly declares that he serves the law of sin. . . . In our weakness sin is always present, which could be charged against us. A little while after he says, "Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to You" (Psalm 32:6). Here he shows that even saints ought to seek forgiveness of sins. They are more than blind who do not realize that wicked desires in the flesh are sins, of which Paul says, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh" (Galatians 5:17). The flesh distrusts God, trusts in present things, seeks human aid in trouble, even contrary to God's will. It flees from suffering, which it ought to bear because of God's commands. It doubts God's mercy and so on. The Holy Spirit in our hearts fights against such tendencies in order to suppress and kill them and to produce new spiritual motives.

—Apology of the Augsburg  
Confession V (III) 45–49 [166–170]

## Hymnody

The Law of God is good and wise  
And sets His will before our eyes,  
Shows us the way of righteousness,  
And dooms to death when we transgress.

—The Law of God Is Good and Wise  
(LSB 579:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, You are always more ready to hear than we to pray and always ready to give more than we either desire or deserve. Pour down on us the abundance of Your mercy; forgive us those things of which our conscience is afraid; and give us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask except by the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C83)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism III 59–70

## 17 JANUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>In Judah | God is known;\*  
his name is great in | Israel.
- <sup>2</sup>His abode has been established in | Salem,\*  
his dwelling place in | Zion.
- <sup>3</sup>There he broke the flashing | arrows,\*  
the shield, the sword,  
and the weap- | ons of war.
- <sup>6</sup>At your rebuke, O God of | Jacob,\*  
both rider and | horse lay stunned.
- <sup>7</sup>But you, you are | to be feared!\*  
Who can stand before you when once  
your an- | ger is roused?
- <sup>8</sup>From the heavens you uttered | judgment,\*  
the earth feared | and was still,
- <sup>9</sup>when God arose to establish | judgment,\*  
to save all the humble | of the earth.

<sup>11</sup>Make your vows to the LORD your God  
and per- | form them;\*

let all around him bring gifts  
to him who is | to be feared,

<sup>12</sup>who cuts off the spirit of | princes,\*

who is to be feared by the kings | of  
the earth.

—Psalm 76:1–3, 6–9, 11–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 137*

### Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 39:1–10, 17–29

[Prophecy Against Gog]

<sup>1</sup>“And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. <sup>2</sup>And I will turn you about and drive you forward, and bring you up from the uttermost parts of the north, and lead you against the mountains of Israel. <sup>3</sup>Then I will strike your bow from your left hand, and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand. <sup>4</sup>You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. <sup>5</sup>You shall fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>6</sup>I will send fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands, and they shall know that I am the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>“And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. <sup>8</sup>Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, declares the Lord GOD. That is the day of which I have spoken.

<sup>9</sup>“Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and make fires of the weapons and burn them, shields and bucklers, bow and arrows, clubs and spears; and they will make fires of them for seven years, <sup>10</sup>so that they will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forests, for they will make their fires of the weapons. They will seize the spoil of those who despoiled them, and plunder those who plundered them, declares the Lord GOD.

...

<sup>17</sup>“As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD: Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field, ‘Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. <sup>18</sup>You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of he-goats, of bulls, all of them fat beasts of Bashan. <sup>19</sup>And you shall eat fat till you are filled, and drink blood till you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you. <sup>20</sup>And you shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,’ declares the Lord GOD.

<sup>21</sup>“And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid on them. <sup>22</sup>The house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God, from that day forward. <sup>23</sup>And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity, because they dealt so treacherously with me that I hid my face from them and gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and they all fell by the sword. <sup>24</sup>I dealt with them according to their

uncleanness and their transgressions, and hid my face from them.

The LORD Will Restore Israel

<sup>25</sup>“Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name. <sup>26</sup>They shall forget their shame and all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they dwell securely in their land with none to make them afraid, <sup>27</sup>when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their enemies’ lands, and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. <sup>28</sup>Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore. <sup>29</sup>And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD.”

### New Testament Reading: Romans 7:21–8:17

[The Law and Sin]

<sup>21</sup>So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, <sup>23</sup>but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. <sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup>Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

## Life in the Spirit

<sup>8:1</sup>There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup>For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup>For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup>Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup>You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

## Heirs with Christ

<sup>12</sup>So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

<sup>15</sup>For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

## Writing

This particular Pauline way of thinking and speaking is very pleasing and comforting. Similarly in Romans (7:23) he opposes the Law of the Spirit to the law in his members. Because this way of speaking is so new and strange, it enters more easily into the heart and remains more firmly in the memory. Besides, it sounds sweeter when he says: "I through the Law died to the Law" than if he were to say: "I through liberty died to the Law." For he is drawing a picture, as though Law were battling against Law. It is as though he were saying: "Law, if you are able to bite me, bind me, and plague me, I will put another Law above you, that is, another tyrant and tormentor, who will accuse you, bind you, and oppress you in turn. You are indeed my tormentor. But I have another tormentor, namely, Christ. He will torment you all the way. When you have been tormented all the way by Him, then I am free." Likewise, if the devil whips me, I have a stronger devil, who will whip him in turn. And when the more powerful devil battles and conquers the powerful one, I am set free. Thus grace is a Law—not to me, because it does not bind me, but to my Law; this it binds in such a way that it cannot bind me any longer.

Therefore Paul would like to draw us away completely from looking at the Law, sin, death, and other evil things, and to transfer us to Christ, in order that there we might see this very joyous duel: the Law battling against the Law, in order to become liberty to me; sin battling against sin, in order to become righteousness to me; death battling against death, in order that I might have life. For Christ is my devil against the devil, that I might be a son of God; He destroys hell, that I might have the kingdom of heaven.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Creator Spirit, by whose aid  
The world's foundations first were laid,  
Come, visit ev'ry humble mind;  
Come, pour Your joys on humankind;  
From sin and sorrow set us free;  
May we Your living temples be.

—Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid  
(LSB 500:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, the strength of all who trust in You, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing, grant us Your grace to keep Your commandments that we may please You in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H61)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism III 71–84

## 18 JANUARY

### *The Confession of St. Peter*

#### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> O God, we have heard with our ears,  
our fathers have | told us,\*  
what deeds you performed in their days,  
in the | days of old:

<sup>2</sup> you with your own hand drove out the  
nations, but them you | planted,\*  
you afflicted the peoples,  
but them you | set free;

<sup>3</sup> for not by their own sword did they win the  
land, nor did their own arm | save them,\*  
but your right hand and your arm,  
and the light of your face,  
for you de- | lighted in them.

<sup>9</sup> But you have rejected us and dis- | graced us\*  
and have not gone out with our | armies.

<sup>10</sup> You have made us turn back | from the foe,\*  
and those who hate us have | gotten spoil.

<sup>20</sup> If we had forgotten the name | of our God\*  
or spread out our hands  
to a | foreign god,

<sup>21</sup> would not God dis- | cover this?\*

For he knows the secrets | of the heart.

<sup>22</sup> Yet for your sake we are killed  
all the | day long;\*

we are regarded as sheep  
to be | slaughtered.

<sup>23</sup> Awake! Why are you sleeping, | O Lord?\*

Rouse yourself!  
Do not reject us for- | ever!

<sup>26</sup> Rise up; come | to our help!\*

Redeem us for the sake  
of your | steadfast love!

—Psalm 44:1–3, 9–10, 20–23, 26

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 124*

## Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 40:1–4; 43:1–12

### Vision of the New Temple

<sup>1</sup>In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was struck down, on that very day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me to the city. <sup>2</sup>In visions of God he brought me to the land of Israel, and set me down on a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south. <sup>3</sup>When he brought me there, behold, there was a man whose appearance was like bronze, with a linen cord and a measuring reed in his hand. And he was standing in the gateway. <sup>4</sup>And the man said to me, “Son of man, look with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you. Declare all that you see to the house of Israel.” . . .

### The Glory of the LORD Fills the Temple

<sup>43:1</sup>Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. <sup>2</sup>And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. <sup>3</sup>And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my face. <sup>4</sup>As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, <sup>5</sup>the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

<sup>6</sup>While the man was standing beside me, I heard one speaking to me out of the temple, <sup>7</sup>and he said to me, “Son of man,

this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever. And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoring and by the dead bodies of their kings at their high places, <sup>8</sup>by setting their threshold by my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them. They have defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed, so I have consumed them in my anger. <sup>9</sup>Now let them put away their whoring and the dead bodies of their kings far from me, and I will dwell in their midst forever.

<sup>10</sup>“As for you, son of man, describe to the house of Israel the temple, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and they shall measure the plan. <sup>11</sup>And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, that is, its whole design; and make known to them as well all its statutes and its whole design and all its laws, and write it down in their sight, so that they may observe all its laws and all its statutes and carry them out. <sup>12</sup>This is the law of the temple: the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.”

*Additional Reading: Ezekiel 40:5–42:20; 43:13–27*

## New Testament Reading: Romans 8:18–39

### Future Glory

<sup>18</sup>For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing

with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup>For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. <sup>23</sup>And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup>For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

<sup>26</sup>Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup>And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. <sup>28</sup>And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

God's Everlasting Love

<sup>31</sup>What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>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? <sup>33</sup>Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>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. <sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written,

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

<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>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.

## Writing

From these words we learn that we do not offer Christ as a sacrifice, but that Christ offers us. And in this way it is permissible, yes, profitable, to call the mass a sacrifice; not on its own account, but because we offer ourselves as a sacrifice along with Christ. That is, we lay ourselves on Christ by a firm faith in his testament and do not otherwise appear before God with our prayer, praise, and sacrifice except through Christ and his mediation. Nor do we doubt that Christ is our priest or minister in heaven before God. Such faith, truly, brings it to pass that Christ takes up our cause, presents us and our prayer and praise, and also offers himself for us in heaven. If the mass were so understood

and for this reason called a sacrifice, it would be well. Not that we offer the sacrament, but that by our praise, prayer, and sacrifice we move him and give him occasion to offer himself for us in heaven and ourselves with him. It is as if I were to say, I had brought a king's son to his father as an offering, when actually I had done no more than induce that son to present my need and petition to the king and made the son my mediator.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

If God Himself be for me,  
I may a host defy;  
For when I pray, before me  
My foes, confounded, fly.  
If Christ, my head and master,  
Befriend me from above,  
What foe or what disaster  
Can drive me from His love?

—If God Himself Be for Me  
(LSB 724:1)

### Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, You revealed to the apostle Peter the blessed truth that Your Son Jesus is the Christ. Strengthen us by the proclamation of this truth that we too may joyfully confess that there is salvation in no one else; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F08)

### Confession of St. Peter

The confession of St. Peter did not arise in the imagination of Peter's heart but was revealed to him by the Father. The reason this confession is important is seen in Jesus' response: "You are Peter [Greek *Petros*], and

on this rock [Greek *petra*] I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18). As the people of God in the Old Testament began with the person of Abraham, the rock from which God's people were hewn (Isaiah 51:1–2), so the people of God in the New Testament would begin with the person of Peter, whose confession is the rock on which Christ would build His Church. But Peter was not alone (the "keys" given to him in Matthew 16:19 were given to all the disciples in Matthew 18:18 and John 20:21–23). As St. Paul tells us, Peter and the other apostles take their place with the prophets as the foundation of the Church, with Christ Himself as the cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). The confession of Peter, therefore, is the witness of the entire apostolic band and is foundational in the building of Christ's Church. Thus the Church gives thanks to God for St. Peter and the other apostles who have instructed Christ's Holy Church in His divine and saving truth.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism III 85–98

## 19 JANUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, who shall sojourn | in your tent?\*
- Who shall dwell on your | holy hill?
- <sup>2</sup> He who walks blamelessly  
and does | what is right\*
- and speaks truth | in his heart;
- <sup>3</sup> who does not slander with his tongue  
and does no evil to his | neighbor,\*
- nor takes up a reproach a- | gainst  
his friend;

<sup>4</sup>in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who | fear the LORD;\* who swears to his own hurt and | does not change;

<sup>5</sup>who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the | innocent.\*

He who does these things shall nev- | er be moved.

—Psalm 15:1-5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 126*

### Old Testament Reading:

**Ezekiel 44:1-16, 23-29**

The Gate for the Prince

<sup>1</sup>Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east. And it was shut. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD said to me, “This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered by it. Therefore it shall remain shut. <sup>3</sup>Only the prince may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD. He shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way.”

<sup>4</sup>Then he brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple, and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple of the LORD. And I fell on my face. <sup>5</sup>And the LORD said to me, “Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes, and hear with your ears all that I shall tell you concerning all the statutes of the temple of the LORD and all its laws. And mark well the entrance to the temple and all the exits from the sanctuary. <sup>6</sup>And say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: O house of Israel, enough of all your abominations, <sup>7</sup>in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my

sanctuary, profaning my temple, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You have broken my covenant, in addition to all your abominations. <sup>8</sup>And you have not kept charge of my holy things, but you have set others to keep my charge for you in my sanctuary.

<sup>9</sup>“Thus says the Lord GOD: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary. <sup>10</sup>But the Levites who went far from me, going astray from me after their idols when Israel went astray, shall bear their punishment. <sup>11</sup>They shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the temple and ministering in the temple. They shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before the people, to minister to them. <sup>12</sup>Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn concerning them, declares the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their punishment. <sup>13</sup>They shall not come near to me, to serve me as priest, nor come near any of my holy things and the things that are most holy, but they shall bear their shame and the abominations that they have committed. <sup>14</sup>Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the temple, to do all its service and all that is to be done in it.

Rules for Levitical Priests

<sup>15</sup>“But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me, shall come near to me to minister to me. And they shall stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup>They shall enter my sanctuary, and

they shall approach my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge. . . .<sup>23</sup>They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.<sup>24</sup>In a dispute, they shall act as judges, and they shall judge it according to my judgments. They shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my appointed feasts, and they shall keep my Sabbaths holy.<sup>25</sup>They shall not defile themselves by going near to a dead person. However, for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister they may defile themselves.<sup>26</sup>After he has become clean, they shall count seven days for him.<sup>27</sup>And on the day that he goes into the Holy Place, into the inner court, to minister in the Holy Place, he shall offer his sin offering, declares the Lord God.

<sup>28</sup>“This shall be their inheritance: I am their inheritance: and you shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession.<sup>29</sup>They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering, and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs.”

### New Testament Reading: Romans 9:1–18

God’s Sovereign Choice

<sup>1</sup>I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup>that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup>For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. <sup>5</sup>To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race,

according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

<sup>6</sup>But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, <sup>7</sup>and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” <sup>8</sup>This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. <sup>9</sup>For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” <sup>10</sup>And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, <sup>11</sup>though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—<sup>12</sup>she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” <sup>13</sup>As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

<sup>14</sup>What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! <sup>15</sup>For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” <sup>16</sup>So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. <sup>17</sup>For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” <sup>18</sup>So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

### Writing

Glory to You, who by Your cross has taken away the heathenism in which both the

circumcised and uncircumcised were caused to stumble! Praise to You, the medicine of life, who has converted all who are baptized to Him who is life of all and Lord of all! The lost who are found bless You, for by finding the lost, You have given joy to the angels that are found and were not lost. The uncircumcised praise You, for in Your peace the enmity that was between is swallowed up. For You received in Your flesh the outward sign of circumcision, through which the uncircumcised formerly accounted as not Yours are now Your own people. You made the circumcision of the heart Your sign by which the circumcised were made known that they were not Your people. For You came to Your own, and Your own received You not; and by this they were made known that they were not Your people. But through Your mercy, those to whom You did not come cry out after You, so that You would satisfy them with the crumbs that fall from the children's table.

God was sent from the Godhead to come and convict the graven images that they were no gods. And when He took away from them the name of God that had adorned them, then the blemishes of their persons appeared. These were their blemishes: they have eyes but do not see; they have ears but do not hear. Your preaching persuaded their many worshipers to exchange their many gods for the one God. By that, You took away the name of godhead from the idols. Worship was withdrawn along with the name, that is, the worship bound up with the name, for worship also attends on the name of God. Because, then, worship was also rendered to the name by all the Gentiles, at the last the worshipful name shall be gathered in completely to its Lord, so that it may be

fulfilled that "all things shall be subjected to Him" [1 Corinthians 15:27].

—Ephraim Syrus

### Hymnody

Let the earth now praise the Lord,  
Who has truly kept His word  
And at last to us did send  
Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

—Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord  
(LSB 352:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, Your almighty power is made known chiefly in showing mercy. Grant us the fullness of Your grace that we may be called to repentance and made partakers of Your heavenly treasures; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B67)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism III 99–111

## 20 JANUARY

*Sarah*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD, all | nations!\*  
Extol him, all | peoples!

<sup>2</sup> For great is his steadfast | love toward us,\*  
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures  
forever. | Praise the LORD!

—Psalm 117

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 97*

## Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 47:1–14, 21–23

### Water Flowing from the Temple

<sup>1</sup>Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. <sup>2</sup>Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side.

<sup>3</sup>Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. <sup>4</sup>Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. <sup>5</sup>Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. <sup>6</sup>And he said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?”

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. <sup>7</sup>As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. <sup>8</sup>And he said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. <sup>9</sup>And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. <sup>10</sup>Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim

it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. <sup>11</sup>But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. <sup>12</sup>And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

### Division of the Land

<sup>13</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD: “This is the boundary by which you shall divide the land for inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall have two portions. <sup>14</sup>And you shall divide equally what I swore to give to your fathers. This land shall fall to you as your inheritance. . . .

<sup>21</sup>“So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel. <sup>22</sup>You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the sojourners who reside among you and have had children among you. They shall be to you as native-born children of Israel. With you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. <sup>23</sup>In whatever tribe the sojourner resides, there you shall assign him his inheritance, declares the Lord God.”

## New Testament Reading: Romans 9:19–33

### [God’s Sovereign Choice]

<sup>19</sup>You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” <sup>20</sup>But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” <sup>21</sup>Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use

and another for dishonorable use? <sup>22</sup>What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup>in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—<sup>24</sup>even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup>As indeed he says in Hosea,

“Those who were not my people  
I will call ‘my people,’  
and her who was not beloved  
I will call ‘beloved.’”

<sup>26</sup>“And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

<sup>27</sup>And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, <sup>28</sup>for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.” <sup>29</sup>And as Isaiah predicted,

“If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring,  
we would have been like Sodom  
and become like Gomorrah.”

Israel's Unbelief

<sup>30</sup>What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; <sup>31</sup>but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. <sup>32</sup>Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, <sup>33</sup>as it is written,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone

of stumbling, and a rock of offense;  
and whoever believes in him  
will not be put to shame.”

## Writing

Now, as I have often said, God's Word teaches us that the sacrament of baptism has three parts. The first is just natural water . . . [Baptism] is water, but there is something more which is added to it, which makes this water glorious and holy, makes it in fact the real baptism, namely:

The second part, God's Word beside and with the water, which is not something we have invented or dreamed up, but is rather the Word of Christ, who said, “Go into all the world and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” [Matt. 28:19]. When these words are added to the water, then it is no longer simple water like other water, but a holy, divine, blessed water. For where the Word of God, by which he created heaven and earth and all things, is present, there God himself is present with his power and might. . . . we must not look upon the water as simply water without the Word, but rather know that the Word with and beside the water constitutes the substance of baptism, as St. Paul says clearly in Eph. 5 [26] that Christ washed and cleansed his bride, the church, by the washing of water with the Word, which is quite a different bath and washing than that which occurs through natural water or human washing and bathing in a tub. For here, says St. Paul, is the Word of the living God which says, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; in other words, here not a man, but God himself is baptizing. For when it is done in his name it is done indeed by the holy Trinity.

Then there is a third part which is necessary to make it a sacrament, namely, institution or the Word which institutes and ordains baptism; for two kinds of Word must be present in order that it be a baptism. One which is spoken with the water or baptizing, the second that which orders and commands us to baptize in this way, that is, to immerse in water and to speak these words. When these two come together, namely, the command and institution to do this and the Word with the water, which is used in accord with the institution and practices and administers the same, then this is called a baptism and is a baptism.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

For You have promised, Lord, to heed  
Your children's cries in time of need  
Through Him whose name alone is great,  
Our Savior and our advocate.

—When in the Hour of Deepest Need  
(LSB 615:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord and Father of all, You looked with favor upon Sarai in her advanced years, putting on her a new name, *Sarah*, and with it the promise of multitudinous blessings from her aged womb. Give us a youthful hope in the joy of our own new name, being baptized into the promised Messiah, that we, too, might be fruitful in Your kingdom, abounding in the works of Your Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1137)

### Sarah

Sarah was the wife (and half sister) of the Hebrew patriarch Abraham (Genesis 11:29; 20:12). In obedience to divine command (Genesis 12:1), she made the long and arduous journey west, along with her husband and his relatives, from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran and then finally to the land of Canaan. She remained childless until old age. Then, in keeping with God's long-standing promise, she gave birth to a son and heir of the covenant (Genesis 21:1–3). She is remembered and honored as the wife of Abraham and the mother of Isaac, the second of the three patriarchs. She is also favorably noted for her hospitality to strangers (Genesis 18:1–8). Following her death at the age of 127, she was laid to rest in the Cave of Machpelah (Genesis 23:19), where her husband was later buried.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism III 112–124

## 21 JANUARY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> May the LORD answer you in the day  
of | trouble!\*

May the name of the God of Jacob  
pro- | tect you!

<sup>2</sup> May he send you help from the  
sanctu- | ary\*

and give you support from | Zion!

<sup>3</sup> May he remember all your | offerings\*  
and regard with favor your burnt  
sacri- | fices!

<sup>4</sup>May he grant you your | heart's desire\*  
and fulfill | all your plans!

<sup>5</sup>May we shout for joy over your salvation,  
and in the name of our God set up  
our | banners!\*

May the LORD fulfill all your pe- | titions!

<sup>6</sup>Now I know that the LORD saves  
his a- | nointed;\*

he will answer him from his holy heaven  
with the saving might of his | right hand.

<sup>7</sup>Some trust in chariots and some in |  
horses,\*

but we trust in the name of the | LORD  
our God.

<sup>8</sup>They col- | lapse and fall,\*  
but we rise and | stand upright.

<sup>9</sup>O LORD, | save the king!\*

May he answer us | when we call.  
—Psalm 20:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 13*

**Old Testament Reading: Joel 1:1–20**

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD that came to Joel,  
the son of Pethuel:

An Invasion of Locusts

<sup>2</sup>Hear this, you elders;  
give ear, all inhabitants of the land!  
Has such a thing happened in your days,  
or in the days of your fathers?

<sup>3</sup>Tell your children of it,  
and let your children  
tell their children,  
and their children  
to another generation.

<sup>4</sup>What the cutting locust left,  
the swarming locust has eaten.  
What the swarming locust left,  
the hopping locust has eaten,  
and what the hopping locust left,

the destroying locust has eaten.

<sup>5</sup>Awake, you drunkards, and weep,  
and wail, all you drinkers of wine,  
because of the sweet wine,  
for it is cut off from your mouth.

<sup>6</sup>For a nation has come up  
against my land,  
powerful and beyond number;  
its teeth are lions' teeth',  
and it has the fangs of a lioness.

<sup>7</sup>It has laid waste my vine  
and splintered my fig tree;  
it has stripped off their bark  
and thrown it down;  
their branches are made white.

<sup>8</sup>Lament like a virgin wearing sackcloth  
for the bridegroom of her youth.

<sup>9</sup>The grain offering and the drink offering  
are cut off  
from the house of the LORD.

The priests mourn,  
the ministers of the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>The fields are destroyed,  
the ground mourns,  
because the grain is destroyed,  
the wine dries up,  
the oil languishes.

<sup>11</sup>Be ashamed, O tillers of the soil;  
wail, O vinedressers,  
for the wheat and the barley,  
because the harvest  
of the field has perished.

<sup>12</sup>The vine dries up;  
the fig tree languishes.  
Pomegranate, palm, and apple,  
all the trees of the field are dried up,  
and gladness dries up  
from the children of man.

## A Call to Repentance

<sup>13</sup>Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests;  
wail, O ministers of the altar.  
Go in, pass the night in sackcloth,  
O ministers of my God!  
Because grain offering and drink offering  
are withheld from the house  
of your God.

<sup>14</sup>Consecrate a fast;  
call a solemn assembly.  
Gather the elders  
and all the inhabitants of the land  
to the house of the LORD your God,  
and cry out to the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>Alas for the day!  
For the day of the LORD is near,  
and as destruction from  
the Almighty it comes.

<sup>16</sup>Is not the food cut off  
before our eyes,  
joy and gladness  
from the house of our God?

<sup>17</sup>The seed shrivels under the clods;  
the storehouses are desolate;  
the granaries are torn down  
because the grain has dried up.

<sup>18</sup>How the beasts groan!  
The herds of cattle are perplexed  
because there is no pasture for them;  
even the flocks of sheep suffer.

<sup>19</sup>To you, O LORD, I call.  
For fire has devoured  
the pastures of the wilderness,  
and flame has burned  
all the trees of the field.

<sup>20</sup>Even the beasts of the field pant for you  
because the water brooks  
are dried up,  
and fire has devoured  
the pastures of the wilderness.

## New Testament Reading: Romans 10:1–21

[Israel's Unbelief]

<sup>1</sup>Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. <sup>2</sup>For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup>For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. <sup>4</sup>For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The Message of Salvation to All

<sup>5</sup>For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. <sup>6</sup>But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) <sup>7</sup>or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup>But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); <sup>9</sup>because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup>For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." <sup>12</sup>For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup>For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

<sup>14</sup>How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear

without someone preaching? <sup>15</sup>And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” <sup>16</sup>But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” <sup>17</sup>So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

<sup>18</sup>But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for

“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,  
and their words to the ends  
of the world.”

<sup>19</sup>But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says,

“I will make you jealous of those  
who are not a nation;  
with a foolish nation  
I will make you angry.”

<sup>20</sup>Then Isaiah is so bold as to say,

“I have been found by those who  
did not seek me;  
I have shown myself to those who  
did not ask for me.”

<sup>21</sup>But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

## Writing

But why do we speak of Jerusalem, since, indeed, the fashion of the whole world must also pass away, when the time of its disappearance has come, in order that the fruit indeed may be gathered into the garner, but the chaff, left behind, may be consumed by fire? “For the day of the Lord cometh as a burning furnace, and all sinners shall be stubble, they who do evil things, and the day

shall burn them up” [Malachi 4:1]. Now, who this Lord is that brings such a day about, John the Baptist points out, when he says of Christ, “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, having His fan in His hand to cleanse His floor; and He will gather His fruit into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire” [Matthew 3:11–12]. . . . But man, being endowed with reason, and in this respect like to God, having been made free in his will, and with power over himself, is himself the cause to himself, that sometimes he becomes wheat, and sometimes chaff. Wherefore also he shall be justly condemned, because, having been created a rational being, he lost the true rationality, and living irrationally, opposed the righteousness of God.

—Irenaeus

## Hymnody

Take my hands and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love;  
Take my feet and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

—Take My Life and Let It Be  
(LSB 783:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, grant us the Spirit to hear Your Word and know the one thing needful that by Your Word and Spirit we may live according to Your will; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C69)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism IV 1–16

## 22 JANUARY

## Psalmody

- <sup>19</sup>You know my reproach, and my shame  
and my dis- | honor;\*  
my foes are all | known to you.
- <sup>20</sup>Reproaches have broken my heart,  
so that I am | in despair.\*  
I looked for pity, but there was none,  
and for comforters, but I | found none.
- <sup>21</sup>They gave me poi- | son for food,\*  
and for my thirst they gave me  
sour | wine to drink.
- <sup>22</sup>Let their own table before them  
be- | come a snare;\*  
and when they are at peace,  
let it be- | come a trap.
- <sup>23</sup>Let their eyes be darkened,  
so that they | cannot see,\*  
and make their loins tremble  
con- | tinually.
- <sup>32</sup>When the humble see it they | will be glad;\*  
you who seek God,  
let your | hearts revive.
- <sup>33</sup>For the LORD hears the | needy\*  
and does not despise his own people who  
are | prisoners.  
—Psalm 69:19–23, 32–33

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 121*

## Old Testament Reading: Joel 2:1–17

The Day of the LORD

- <sup>1</sup>Blow a trumpet in Zion;  
sound an alarm on my holy mountain!  
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,  
for the day of the LORD is coming; it is  
near,  
<sup>2</sup>a day of darkness and gloom,  
a day of clouds and thick darkness!

- Like blackness there is spread  
upon the mountains  
a great and powerful people;  
their like has never been before,  
nor will be again after them  
through the years of all generations.
- <sup>3</sup>Fire devours before them,  
and behind them a flame burns.  
The land is like the garden  
of Eden before them,  
but behind them a desolate wilderness,  
and nothing escapes them.
- <sup>4</sup>Their appearance is like the appearance  
of horses,  
and like war horses they run.
- <sup>5</sup>As with the rumbling of chariots,  
they leap on the tops of the mountains,  
like the crackling of a flame of fire  
devouring the stubble,  
like a powerful army  
drawn up for battle.
- <sup>6</sup>Before them peoples are in anguish;  
all faces grow pale.
- <sup>7</sup>Like warriors they charge;  
like soldiers they scale the wall.  
They march each on his way;  
they do not swerve from their paths.
- <sup>8</sup>They do not jostle one another;  
each marches in his path;  
they burst through the weapons  
and are not halted.
- <sup>9</sup>They leap upon the city,  
they run upon the walls,  
they climb up into the houses,  
they enter through the windows like a  
thief.
- <sup>10</sup>The earth quakes before them;  
the heavens tremble.  
The sun and the moon are darkened,  
and the stars withdraw their shining.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD utters his voice  
before his army,  
for his camp is exceedingly great;  
he who executes his word is powerful.  
For the day of the LORD is great  
and very awesome;  
who can endure it?

Return to the LORD

<sup>12</sup>“Yet even now,” declares the LORD,  
“return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping,  
and with mourning;  
<sup>13</sup>and 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.

<sup>14</sup>Who 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?

<sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
consecrate a fast;  
call a solemn assembly;  
<sup>16</sup>gather the people.

Consecrate the congregation;  
assemble the elders;  
gather the children,  
even nursing infants.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,  
and the bride her chamber.

<sup>17</sup>Between the vestibule and the altar  
let the priests, the ministers  
of the LORD, weep

and say, “Spare your people, O LORD,  
and make not your heritage a reproach,  
a byword among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples,  
“Where is their God?”

### New Testament Reading: Romans 11:1–24

The Remnant of Israel

<sup>1</sup>I ask, then, has God rejected his people?  
By no means! For I myself am an Israelite,  
a descendant of Abraham, a member of the  
tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>God has not rejected  
his people whom he foreknew. Do you not  
know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how  
he appeals to God against Israel? <sup>3</sup>“Lord,  
they have killed your prophets, they have  
demolished your altars, and I alone am left,  
and they seek my life.” <sup>4</sup>But what is God’s  
reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven  
thousand men who have not bowed the knee  
to Baal.” <sup>5</sup>So too at the present time there is  
a remnant, chosen by grace. <sup>6</sup>But if it is by  
grace, it is no longer on the basis of works;  
otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

<sup>7</sup>What then? Israel failed to obtain what  
it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the  
rest were hardened, <sup>8</sup>as it is written,

“God gave them a spirit of stupor,  
eyes that would not see  
and ears that would not hear,  
down to this very day.”

<sup>9</sup>And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,  
a stumbling block and a retribution  
for them;

<sup>10</sup>let their eyes be darkened so that they  
cannot see,  
and bend their backs forever.”

Gentiles Grafted In

<sup>11</sup>So I ask, did they stumble in order  
that they might fall? By no means! Rather

through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. <sup>12</sup>Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

<sup>13</sup>Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry <sup>14</sup>in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. <sup>15</sup>For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? <sup>16</sup>If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

<sup>17</sup>But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup>do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. <sup>19</sup>Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” <sup>20</sup>That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. <sup>21</sup>For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. <sup>22</sup>Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. <sup>23</sup>And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup>For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

## Writing

Holy Scripture also testifies that God, who has called us, is faithful. So when He has begun the good work in us, He will also preserve it to the end and perfect it, if we ourselves do not turn from Him, but firmly hold on to the work begun to the end. He has promised His grace for this very purpose. (See 1 Corinthians 1:9; Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 3:2.)

We should concern ourselves with this revealed will of God. We should follow and diligently think about it. Through the Word, by which He calls us, the Holy Spirit bestows grace, power, and ability for this purpose. We should not sound the depths of God’s hidden predestination, as it is written in Luke 13:23–24, where one asks, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” and Christ answers, “Strive to enter through the narrow door.” So Luther says:

But you had better follow the order of this epistle [of Romans]. Worry first about Christ and the gospel, that you may recognize your sin and His grace. Then fight your sin, as the first eight chapters here have taught. Then, when you have reached the eighth chapter, and are under the cross and suffering, this will teach you correctly of predestination in chapters 9, 10, and 11, and how comforting it is. [*Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* (1546); LW 35:378]

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord XI 32–33

## Hymnody

Chief of sinners though I be,  
Jesus shed His blood for me,  
Died that I might live on high,  
Lives that I might never die.  
As the branch is to the vine,  
I am His, and He is mine.

—Chief of Sinners Though I Be  
(LSB 611:1)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, the strength of all who put  
their trust in You, mercifully grant that by  
Your power we may be defended against all  
adversity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son,  
our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and  
the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
(L19)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism IV 17–31

## 23 JANUARY

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, you have searched me  
and | known me!\*

<sup>2</sup>You know when I sit down  
and when I rise up; you discern  
my thoughts | from afar.

<sup>3</sup>You search out my path  
and my | lying down\*  
and are acquainted with | all my ways.

<sup>4</sup>Even before a word is | on my tongue,\*  
behold, O LORD,  
you know it alto- | gether.

<sup>5</sup>You hem me in, behind | and before,\*  
and lay your hand up- | on me.

<sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonder- | ful for me;\*  
it is high; I cannot | attain it.

<sup>12</sup>even the darkness is not | dark to you;\*  
the night is bright as the day, for  
darkness is as | light with you.

<sup>13</sup>For you formed my | inward parts;\*  
you knitted me together  
in my | mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup>I praise you, for I am fearfully  
and wonder- | fully made.\*  
Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it | very well.

—Psalm 139:1–6, 12–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 81*

## Old Testament Reading: Joel 2:18–32

The LORD Had Pity

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD became jealous  
for his land

and had pity on his people.

<sup>19</sup>The LORD answered and said  
to his people,

“Behold, I am sending to you  
grain, wine, and oil,  
and you will be satisfied;  
and I will no more make you  
a reproach among the nations.

<sup>20</sup>“I will remove the northerner far  
from you,

and drive him into a parched  
and desolate land,

his vanguard into the eastern sea,  
and his rear guard  
into the western sea;

the stench and foul smell of him will rise,  
for he has done great things.

<sup>21</sup>“Fear not, O land;  
be glad and rejoice,  
for the LORD has done great things!

<sup>22</sup>Fear not, you beasts of the field,  
 for the pastures of the wilderness  
 are green;  
 the tree bears its fruit;  
 the fig tree and vine  
 give their full yield.

<sup>23</sup>“Be glad, O children of Zion,  
 and rejoice in the LORD your God,  
 for he has given the early rain  
 for your vindication;  
 he has poured down  
 for you abundant rain,  
 the early and the latter rain,  
 as before.

<sup>24</sup>“The threshing floors  
 shall be full of grain;  
 the vats shall overflow  
 with wine and oil.

<sup>25</sup>I will restore to you the years  
 that the swarming locust has eaten,  
 the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,  
 my great army, which I sent  
 among you.

<sup>26</sup>“You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,  
 and praise the name  
 of the LORD your God,  
 who has dealt wondrously with you.  
 And my people shall never again  
 be put to shame.

<sup>27</sup>You shall know that I am  
 in the midst of Israel,  
 and that I am the LORD your God  
 and there is none else.  
 And my people shall never again  
 be put to shame.

The LORD Will Pour Out His Spirit

<sup>28</sup>“And it shall come to pass afterward,  
 that I will pour out my Spirit  
 on all flesh;

your sons and your daughters  
 shall prophesy,  
 your old men shall dream dreams,  
 and your young men shall  
 see visions.

<sup>29</sup>Even on the male and female servants  
 in those days I will pour out  
 my Spirit.

<sup>30</sup>“And I will show wonders in the  
 heavens and on the earth, blood and fire  
 and columns of smoke. <sup>31</sup>The sun shall be  
 turned to darkness, and the moon to blood,  
 before the great and awesome day of the  
 LORD comes. <sup>32</sup>And it shall come to pass that  
 everyone who calls on the name of the LORD  
 shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in  
 Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as  
 the LORD has said, and among the survivors  
 shall be those whom the LORD calls.”

### New Testament Reading: Romans 11:25–12:13

The Mystery of Israel's Salvation

<sup>25</sup>Lest you be wise in your own sight,  
 I want you to understand this mystery,  
 brothers: a partial hardening has come upon  
 Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has  
 come in. <sup>26</sup>And in this way all Israel will be  
 saved, as it is written,

“The Deliverer will come from Zion,  
 he will banish ungodliness  
 from Jacob”;

<sup>27</sup>“and this will be my covenant  
 with them  
 when I take away their sins.”

<sup>28</sup>As regards the gospel, they are enemies of  
 God for your sake. But as regards election,  
 they are beloved for the sake of their  
 forefathers. <sup>29</sup>For the gifts and the calling of  
 God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup>For just as you were at

one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,<sup>31</sup>so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. <sup>32</sup>For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

<sup>33</sup>Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

<sup>34</sup>“For who has known the mind of the Lord,  
or who has been his counselor?”

<sup>35</sup>“Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

<sup>36</sup>For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

#### A Living Sacrifice

<sup>12:1</sup>I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

#### Gifts of Grace

<sup>3</sup>For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup>For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. <sup>6</sup>Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup>if ser-

vice, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup>the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

#### Marks of the True Christian

<sup>9</sup>Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup>Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup>Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup>Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

#### Writing

Athanasius has correctly said that for salvation the correct faith is necessary not only regarding the divine nature in Christ but also regarding the human. And Hilary says that it is a matter of equal danger to deny either the deity or the flesh of our body in Christ Jesus. He goes on to add that the one gives no hope of salvation without the other. For he does not know his own life, he says, who does not know Christ as true God and also as true man. Augustine says that Christ did not die for him who does not know Christ as true man, because He died according to the humanity. Nor will he be justified through Christ, because we are justified by His blood. Leo, in *Epistola 11*, says: “One cannot glory in a head which one says does not possess his own nature.”

Of such importance it is to recognize rightly the human nature in Christ. For in the flesh of Christ God condemned sin (Rom. 8:3), and in the body of His flesh we are reconciled (Col. 1:20). We are justified in His blood (Rom. 5:9). He has laid down His life

as a ransom for many (Matt 20:28). The Son of God is born of a woman in order that we who were under the Law might be redeemed and receive adoption (Gal. 4:4–5). He does not blush to call us brothers, because He has been made a partaker of flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14–17). In short, every spirit which does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God but is the spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:3). But he who eats the flesh of the Son of God and drinks His blood has eternal life, for His flesh is given for the life of the world. (John 6:54, 51)

—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

Oh, the height of Jesus' love,  
Higher than the heav'ns above,  
Deeper than the depths of sea,  
Lasting as eternity!  
Love that found me—wondrous thought!  
Found me when I sought Him not.

—Chief of Sinners Though I Be  
(LSB 611:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, in Your mercy guide the course of this world so that Your Church may joyfully serve You in godly peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B65)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism IV 32–46

## 24 JANUARY

*St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, my heart is not lifted up;  
my eyes are not | raised too high;\*  
I do not occupy myself with things too  
great and too marvel- | ous for me.
- <sup>2</sup> But I have calmed and quieted my soul,  
like a weaned child with its | mother;\*  
like a weaned child is my soul  
with- | in me.
- <sup>3</sup> O Israel, hope | in the LORD\*  
from this time forth and for- | evermore.  
—Psalm 131

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 84*

### Old Testament Reading: Joel 3:1–21

The LORD Judges the Nations

<sup>1</sup>“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land, <sup>3</sup>and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it.

<sup>4</sup>“What are you to me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you paying me back for something? If you are paying me back, I will return your payment on your own head swiftly and speedily. <sup>5</sup>For you have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples. <sup>6</sup>You have sold the people of Judah

and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their own border.  
<sup>7</sup>Behold, I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will return your payment on your own head. <sup>8</sup>I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a nation far away, for the LORD has spoken.”

- <sup>9</sup>Proclaim this among the nations:  
 Consecrate for war;  
     stir up the mighty men.  
 Let all the men of war draw near;  
     let them come up.  
<sup>10</sup>Beat your plowshares into swords,  
     and your pruning hooks into spears;  
     let the weak say, “I am a warrior.”  
<sup>11</sup>Hasten and come,  
     all you surrounding nations,  
     and gather yourselves there.  
 Bring down your warriors, O LORD.  
<sup>12</sup>Let the nations stir themselves up  
     and come up to the Valley  
     of Jehoshaphat;  
 for there I will sit to judge  
     all the surrounding nations.  
<sup>13</sup>Put in the sickle,  
     for the harvest is ripe.  
 Go in, tread,  
     for the winepress is full.  
 The vats overflow,  
     for their evil is great.  
<sup>14</sup>Multitudes, multitudes,  
     in the valley of decision!  
 For the day of the LORD is near  
     in the valley of decision.  
<sup>15</sup>The sun and the moon are darkened,  
     and the stars withdraw their shining.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD roars from Zion,  
     and utters his voice from Jerusalem,  
     and the heavens and the earth quake.  
 But the LORD is a refuge to his people,  
     a stronghold to the people of Israel.

The Glorious Future of Judah

<sup>17</sup>“So you shall know that I am the LORD  
 your God,  
     who dwells in Zion,  
     my holy mountain.  
 And Jerusalem shall be holy,  
     and strangers shall never  
     again pass through it.

<sup>18</sup>“And in that day  
 the mountains shall drip sweet wine,  
     and the hills shall flow with milk,  
 and all the streambeds of Judah  
     shall flow with water;  
 and a fountain shall come forth from the  
 house of the Lord  
     and water the Valley of Shittim.

<sup>19</sup>“Egypt shall become a desolation  
     and Edom a desolate wilderness,  
 for the violence done to the people  
 of Judah,  
     because they have shed innocent  
     blood in their land.

<sup>20</sup>But Judah shall be inhabited forever,  
     and Jerusalem to all generations.

<sup>21</sup>I will avenge their blood,  
     blood I have not avenged,  
     for the LORD dwells in Zion.”

**New Testament Reading:  
 Romans 12:14–13:14**

[Marks of the True Christian]

<sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless  
 and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those  
 who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

<sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. <sup>17</sup>Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup>If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup>Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” <sup>20</sup>To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

#### Submission to the Authorities

<sup>13:1</sup>Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. <sup>2</sup>Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. <sup>3</sup>For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, <sup>4</sup>for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer. <sup>5</sup>Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience. <sup>6</sup>For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. <sup>7</sup>Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

#### Fulfilling the Law Through Love

<sup>8</sup>Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>10</sup>Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

<sup>11</sup>Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup>The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup>Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

#### Writing

Dearly beloved, today we celebrate the commemoration of St. Timothy. He was born in Lystra (Acts 16:2); his father was a pagan, but his mother, Eunice, born an Israelite, had accepted the Christian faith and had committed her son, Timothy, to be raised by her mother, Lois, who was also a Christian. So Timothy learned the catechism from his grandmother. See, dear parents, what the diligent training of children can do! Now since he was a good, excellent thinker, St. Paul accepted him as his colleague or chaplain, and since he improved himself daily, Paul eventually ordained him as bishop of Ephesus, where he was also killed by the raging pagans. St. Paul loved him dearly,

which we can see from both epistles that he wrote to him. In 1 Timothy 1:2, he calls him his true son in the faith. From these two epistles, many passages shine forth like the stars of heaven. 1 Timothy 1:5: “The aim of the commandment is love from a pure heart and from a good conscience and from a faith unfeigned.” 1 Timothy 1:15: “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” 2 Timothy 3:12: “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” 2 Timothy 3:16–17: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” Since St. Paul and St. Timothy were dear friends, they were put beside each other in the calendar, and also on the day of St. Timothy, the Gospel of John 15:9–16 is read, which speaks of pure love and friendship.

—Valerius Herberger

### Hymnody

The nation You have blest  
 May well Your love declare,  
 From foes and fears at rest,  
 Protected by Your care.  
 For this bright day,  
 For this fair land—  
 Gifts of Your hand—  
 Our thanks we pay.

—Before You, Lord, We Bow  
 (LSB 966:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, You have always given to Your Church on earth faithful shepherds such as Timothy to guide and feed Your

flock. Make all pastors diligent to preach Your holy Word and administer Your means of grace, and grant Your people wisdom to follow in the way that leads to life eternal; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F09)

### St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor

St. Timothy had Christian believers in his family. His mother, Eunice, was a Christian woman and was the daughter of a Christian woman named Lois (2 Timothy 1:5). Acts records that St. Paul met Timothy on his second missionary journey and wanted Timothy to continue on with him (16:1–3). Over time, Timothy became a dear friend and close associate of Paul to whom Paul entrusted mission work in Greece and Asia Minor. Timothy was also with Paul in Rome. According to tradition, after Paul’s death, Timothy went to Ephesus, where he served as bishop and was martyred around AD 97. Timothy is best remembered as a faithful companion of Paul, one who rendered great service among the Gentile churches.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism IV 47–55

## 25 JANUARY

*The Conversion of St. Paul*

### Psalmody

<sup>4</sup>Turn, O LORD, deliver my life;  
 save me for the sake  
 of your steadfast love.

<sup>5</sup>For in death there is no remem- | brance  
of you;\*  
in Sheol who will | give you praise?  
<sup>6</sup>I am weary with my moaning;  
every night I flood my | bed with tears;\*  
I drench my couch with my | weeping.  
<sup>7</sup>My eye wastes away be- | cause of grief;\*  
it grows weak because of | all my foes.  
<sup>8</sup>Depart from me, all you workers of | evil,\*  
for the LORD has heard the sound  
of my | weeping.  
<sup>9</sup>The LORD has | heard my plea;\*  
the LORD ac- | cepts my prayer.  
<sup>10</sup>All my enemies shall be ashamed  
and greatly | troubled;\*  
they shall turn back and be put to shame  
in a | moment.  
—Psalm 6:4–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 67*

### **Old Testament Reading: Zechariah 1:1–21**

A Call to Return to the LORD

<sup>1</sup>In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, <sup>2</sup>“The LORD was very angry with your fathers. <sup>3</sup>Therefore say to them, Thus declares the LORD of hosts: Return to me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>4</sup>Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.’ But they did not hear or pay attention to me, declares the LORD. <sup>5</sup>Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? <sup>6</sup>But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your

fathers? So they repented and said, As the LORD of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us.”

A Vision of a Horseman

<sup>7</sup>On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, <sup>8</sup>“I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses. <sup>9</sup>Then I said, ‘What are these, my lord?’ The angel who talked with me said to me, ‘I will show you what they are.’ <sup>10</sup>So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, ‘These are they whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth.’ <sup>11</sup>And they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, ‘We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.’ <sup>12</sup>Then the angel of the LORD said, ‘O LORD of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these seventy years?’ <sup>13</sup>And the LORD answered gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. <sup>14</sup>So the angel who talked with me said to me, ‘Cry out, Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. <sup>15</sup>And I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little, they furthered the disaster. <sup>16</sup>Therefore, thus says the LORD, I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy; my house shall be built in it, declares the LORD of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. <sup>17</sup>Cry out again, Thus says the

LORD of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.’ ”

A Vision of Horns and Craftsmen

<sup>18</sup> And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four horns! <sup>19</sup>And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these?” And he said to me, “These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.” <sup>20</sup>Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. <sup>21</sup>And I said, “What are these coming to do?” He said, “These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one raised his head. And these have come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it.”

### New Testament Reading: Romans 14:1–23

Do Not Pass Judgment on One Another

<sup>1</sup>As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. <sup>2</sup>One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup>Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

<sup>5</sup>One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup>The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and

gives thanks to God. <sup>7</sup>For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. <sup>8</sup>For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. <sup>9</sup>For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

<sup>10</sup>Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; <sup>11</sup>for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord,  
every knee shall bow to me,  
and every tongue shall  
confess to God.”

<sup>12</sup>So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Do Not Cause Another to Stumble

<sup>13</sup>Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. <sup>14</sup>I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. <sup>15</sup>For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. <sup>16</sup>So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. <sup>17</sup>For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. <sup>19</sup>So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

<sup>20</sup>Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another

stumble by what he eats. <sup>21</sup>It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. <sup>22</sup>The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. <sup>23</sup>But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

### Writing

Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. We belong to none other than the Lord. This is our greatest comfort and joy: that we have as our Lord He to whom the Father has given all power in heaven and on earth and has placed all things in His hands. Who, then, could possibly do us harm? The devil may very well attack us with his murderous rage, but he will never snatch us from the Lord's hand. For we who believe in Jesus Christ and live under His guardianship have also become lords ourselves over the devil, sin, death, etc. In order that such lordship might be ours, He was made man for our sake. He appealed to the Father on our behalf and so loves us in this way: He was condemned, offering Himself up for our sakes. With His precious blood He purchased us and washed us clean from sin. Still more He has placed in our hearts the Holy Spirit, the pledge of our inheritance and blessedness, making us kings and priests for God and joint heirs with Himself. This is most certainly true. O Lord, strengthen our faith that we would always remember these things and never doubt these promises.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

May ev'ry heart confess Your name,  
Forever You adore,  
And, seeking You, itself inflame  
To seek You more and more!

—O Jesus, King Most Wonderful  
(*LSB* 554:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You turned the heart of him who persecuted the Church and by his preaching caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world. Grant us ever to rejoice in the saving light of Your Gospel and, following the example of the apostle Paul, to spread it to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F10)

### The Conversion of St. Paul

St. Paul's life-changing experience on the road to Damascus is related three times in the Book of Acts (9:1–9; 22:6–11; 26:12–18). As an archenemy of Christians, Saul of Tarsus set out for Damascus to arrest and bring believers to Jerusalem for trial. While on the way, he saw a blinding light and heard the words: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Saul asked, "Who are You, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." In Damascus, where Saul was brought after being blinded, a disciple named Ananias was directed by the Lord in a vision to go to Saul to restore his sight: "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). After receiving his sight, Saul was

baptized and went on to become known as Paul, the great apostle.

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Large Catechism IV 56–67

**26 JANUARY**

*St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor*

**Psalmody**

<sup>46</sup>The LORD lives, and blessed | be my rock,\*  
and exalted be the God  
of my sal- | vation—

<sup>47</sup>the God who gave me | vengeance\*  
and subdued peoples | under me,

<sup>48</sup>who delivered me from my enemies;  
yes, you exalted me above those  
who rose a- | gainst me;\*  
you rescued me from the man  
of | violence.

<sup>49</sup>For this I will praise you, O LORD,  
among the | nations,\*  
and sing | to your name.

<sup>50</sup>Great salvation he brings | to his king,\*  
and shows steadfast love to his anointed,  
to David and his offspring for- | ever.  
—Psalm 18:46–50

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 134*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Zechariah 2:1–3:10**

A Vision of a Man with a Measuring Line

<sup>1</sup>And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand! <sup>2</sup>Then I said, “Where are you going?” And he said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to

see what is its width and what is its length.”

<sup>3</sup>And behold, the angel who talked with me came forward, and another angel came forward to meet him <sup>4</sup>and said to him, “Run, say to that young man, ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and livestock in it. <sup>5</sup>And I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the LORD, and I will be the glory in her midst.’ ”

<sup>6</sup>Up! Up! Flee from the land of the north, declares the LORD. For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, declares the LORD. <sup>7</sup>Up! Escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. <sup>8</sup>For thus said the LORD of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye: <sup>9</sup>“Behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall become plunder for those who served them. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me. <sup>10</sup>Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD. <sup>11</sup>And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. <sup>12</sup>And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.”

<sup>13</sup>Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

A Vision of Joshua the High Priest

<sup>3:1</sup>Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is

not this a brand plucked from the fire?”

<sup>3</sup>Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. <sup>4</sup>And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.” <sup>5</sup>And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by.

<sup>6</sup>And the angel of the LORD solemnly assured Joshua, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here. <sup>8</sup>Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch. <sup>9</sup>For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. <sup>10</sup>In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree.”

### New Testament Reading: Romans 15:1–13

#### The Example of Christ

<sup>1</sup>We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. <sup>2</sup>Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. <sup>3</sup>For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who

reproached you fell on me.” <sup>4</sup>For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. <sup>5</sup>May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

#### Christ the Hope of Jews and Gentiles

<sup>8</sup>For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, <sup>9</sup>and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,  
and sing to your name.”

<sup>10</sup>And again it is said,

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

<sup>11</sup>And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,  
and let all the peoples extol him.”

<sup>12</sup>And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,  
even he who arises to rule the  
Gentiles;  
in him will the Gentiles hope.”

<sup>13</sup>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

## Writing

This is a wonderfully choice vision, for it very vividly reveals to us the heart and innermost emotions of the priest. He had heard the clear command of God to rebuild the temple. Then, after hearing that Word, he thought that he should listen to God, but he still kept wrestling with himself over the problem thus: “Who knows whether God intends to approve? Perhaps God will reject us sinners.” This is exactly the way the human heart battles against sin in the presence of God. For Satan so inflates and exaggerates sins that the heart becomes convinced that God will reject it. It can conceive of no other God but one who now threatens it with a beating or a flogging. So here the high priest Joshua, crushed and terrified by his sins, does not dare go on with his task. Therefore he is strengthened and encouraged to believe that the Lord is not angry, that He has turned away the accusation of Joshua’s conscience and is accusing Satan himself, who so discourages the heart with the heinousness of its sin that it cannot go on to serve its calling.

*The Lord rebuke you, [O Satan].* This is a very wonderful and sweet comfort. Everything is contained in the fullness of this comfort, so neatly has he arranged all his words, as if to say: “From now on, Satan, stop opposing the priest. The Lord orders all things cursed which you inspire the timid priest to think about and which frighten him from his task. You are causing him to be downcast before God and to dare nothing before men. You are acting as if the Lord had completely rejected Jerusalem. But the Lord has not done this. On the contrary, He has chosen it and loves it as His own possession.” . . .

Everything in this vision is revealed in such a way that the vision declares and reveals God’s will to the priest. It strengthens the priest so that he no longer doubts that God will approve of his ministry, that his filthy garments have been changed, and that his sin has been taken away. Now he wears new clothes, that is, a happy and joyful conscience which no longer flees from God, which thinks nothing evil about God but hopes for every good thing. Thus the fresh clothes do not mean works but grace and faith.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Save us from weak resignation  
 To the evils we deplore;  
 Let the gift of Your salvation  
 Be our glory evermore.  
 Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
 Serving You whom we adore,  
 Serving You whom we adore.  
 —God of Grace and God of Glory  
 (LSB 850:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You called Titus to the work of pastor and teacher. Make all shepherds of Your flock diligent in preaching Your holy Word so that the whole world may know the immeasurable riches of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F11)

## St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor

St. Titus, like Timothy with whom he is often associated, was a friend and co-worker of St. Paul. Titus was a Gentile, perhaps a native of Antioch, who accompanied Paul and

Barnabas to Jerusalem when they brought assistance to the Christians in Judea during a famine (Acts 11:29–30; Galatians 2:1). It is not known if he accompanied Paul on his first or second missionary journeys, but Titus was with him on the third one, when he helped reconcile the Corinthians to Paul (2 Corinthians 7:6–7) and assisted with the collection for the Church in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:3–6). It was probably on the return to Jerusalem that Paul left Titus in Crete (Titus 1:4–5). Afterward he is found working in Dalmatia (2 Timothy 4:10). According to tradition, Titus returned to Crete, where he served as bishop until he died about AD 96.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism IV 68–86

## 27 JANUARY

*John Chrysostom, Preacher*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Blessèd is the man who walks not  
in the counsel of the | wicked,\*  
nor stands in the way of sinners,  
nor sits in the seat of | scoffers;

<sup>2</sup> but his delight is in the law | of the LORD,\*  
and on his law he meditates | day  
and night.

<sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams of water  
that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not | wither.\*  
In all that he does, he | prospers.

<sup>4</sup> The wicked | are not so,\*  
but are like chaff that  
the wind | drives away.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand  
in the | judgment,\*  
nor sinners in the congregation  
of the | righteous;

<sup>6</sup> for the LORD knows the way  
of the | righteous,\*  
but the way of the wicked will | perish.  
—Psalm 1

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 109*

### Old Testament Reading: Zechariah 4:1–5:11

A Vision of a Golden Lampstand

<sup>1</sup>And the angel who talked with me  
came again and woke me, like a man who is  
awakened out of his sleep. <sup>2</sup>And he said to  
me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and  
behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl  
on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with  
seven lips on each of the lamps that are on  
the top of it. <sup>3</sup>And there are two olive trees  
by it, one on the right of the bowl and the  
other on its left.” <sup>4</sup>And I said to the angel  
who talked with me, “What are these, my  
lord?” <sup>5</sup>Then the angel who talked with me  
answered and said to me, “Do you not know  
what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” <sup>6</sup>Then  
he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD  
to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power,  
but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.  
<sup>7</sup>Who are you, O great mountain? Before  
Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And  
he shall bring forward the top stone amid  
shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’ ”

<sup>8</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to me,  
saying, <sup>9</sup>“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid  
the foundation of this house; his hands shall  
also complete it. Then you will know that  
the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. <sup>10</sup>For  
whoever has despised the day of small things

shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

“These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth.”

<sup>11</sup>Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?” <sup>12</sup>And a second time I answered and said to him, “What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?” <sup>13</sup>He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” <sup>14</sup>Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

#### A Vision of a Flying Scroll

<sup>5:1</sup>Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a flying scroll! <sup>2</sup>And he said to me, “What do you see?” I answered, “I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits, and its width ten cubits.” <sup>3</sup>Then he said to me, “This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land. For everyone who steals shall be cleaned out according to what is on one side, and everyone who swears falsely shall be cleaned out according to what is on the other side. <sup>4</sup>I will send it out, declares the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by my name. And it shall remain in his house and consume it, both timber and stones.”

#### A Vision of a Woman in a Basket

<sup>5</sup>Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said to me, “Lift your eyes and see what this is that is going out.” <sup>6</sup>And I said, “What is it?” He said, “This is the basket that is going out.” And he said, “This is their iniquity in all the land.” <sup>7</sup>And behold, the leaden cover was lifted, and there was a

woman sitting in the basket! <sup>8</sup>And he said, “This is Wickedness.” And he thrust her back into the basket, and thrust down the leaden weight on its opening.

<sup>9</sup>Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, two women coming forward! The wind was in their wings. They had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven. <sup>10</sup>Then I said to the angel who talked with me, “Where are they taking the basket?” <sup>11</sup>He said to me, “To the land of Shinar, to build a house for it. And when this is prepared, they will set the basket down there on its base.”

#### New Testament Reading: Romans 15:14–33

Paul the Minister to the Gentiles

<sup>14</sup>I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. <sup>15</sup>But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God <sup>16</sup>to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. <sup>17</sup>In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. <sup>18</sup>For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, <sup>19</sup>by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; <sup>20</sup>and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build

on someone else's foundation, <sup>21</sup>but as it is written,

“Those who have never been told  
of him will see,  
and those who have never heard  
will understand.”

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

<sup>22</sup>This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. <sup>23</sup>But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, <sup>24</sup>I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. <sup>25</sup>At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. <sup>26</sup>For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. <sup>27</sup>For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. <sup>28</sup>When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. <sup>29</sup>I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

<sup>30</sup>I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, <sup>31</sup>that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, <sup>32</sup>so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. <sup>33</sup>May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

## Writing

“He gave Himself a ransom,” he said, how then was He delivered up by the Father? Because it was of His goodness. And what does “ransom” mean? God was about to punish them, but He did not do it. They were about to perish, but in their stead He gave His own Son and sent us as heralds to proclaim the cross. These things are sufficient to attract all and to demonstrate the love of Christ. So truly, so inexpressibly great are the benefits that God has bestowed upon us. He sacrificed Himself for His enemies, who hated and rejected Him. What no one would do for friends, for brothers, for children, that the Lord has done for His servants; a Lord not Himself such a one as His servants, but God for men, for men not deserving. For had they been deserving, had they done His pleasure, it would have been less wonderful. But that He died for such ungrateful, such obstinate creatures, this it is which strikes every mind with amazement. For what men would not do for their fellow-men, that has God done for us!

—John Chrysostom

## Hymnody

Give us lips to sing Thy glory,  
Tongues Thy mercy to proclaim,  
Throats that shout the hope that fills us,  
Mouths to speak Thy holy name.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
May the light which Thou dost send  
Fill our songs with alleluias,  
Alleluias without end!

—Thy Strong Word (*LSB* 578:5)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, You gave to Your servant John Chrysostom grace to proclaim the Gospel with eloquence and power. As bishop of the great congregations of Antioch and Constantinople, he fearlessly bore reproach for the honor of Your name. Mercifully grant to all bishops and pastors such excellence in preaching and fidelity in ministering Your Word that Your people shall be partakers of the divine nature; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1138)

## John Chrysostom, Preacher

Given the added name *Chrysostom*, which means “golden-mouthed” in Greek, St. John was a dominant force in the fourth-century Christian Church. Born in Antioch around AD 347, John was instructed in the Christian faith by his pious mother, Anthusa. After serving in a number of Christian offices, including acolyte and lector, John was ordained a presbyter and given preaching responsibilities. His simple but direct messages found an audience well beyond his hometown. In AD 398, John Chrysostom was made patriarch of Constantinople. His determination to reform the church, court, and city brought him into conflict with established authorities. Eventually, he was exiled from his adopted city. Although removed from his parishes and people, he continued writing and preaching until the time of his death in AD 407. It is reported that his final words were “Glory be to God for all things! Amen.”

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism V 1–14

## 28 JANUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Save, O LORD, for the godly | one is gone,\*  
for the faithful have vanished from  
among the chil- | dren of man.
- <sup>2</sup> Everyone utters lies to his | neighbor,\*  
with flattering lips and a double | heart  
they speak.
- <sup>3</sup> May the LORD cut off all | flattering lips,\*  
the tongue that | makes great boasts,
- <sup>4</sup> those who say, “With our tongue  
we | will prevail,\*  
our lips are with us;  
who is master | over us?”
- <sup>5</sup> “Because the poor are plundered,  
because the needy groan,  
I will now arise,” | says the LORD,\*  
“I will place him in the safety  
for | which he longs.”
- <sup>6</sup> The words of the LORD are | pure words,\*  
like silver refined in a furnace on the  
ground, purified | seven times.
- <sup>7</sup> You, O LORD, will | keep them;\*  
you will guard us from this generation  
for- | ever.
- <sup>8</sup> On every side the | wicked prow1,\*  
as vileness is exalted among  
the chil- | dren of man.  
—Psalm 12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 133*

## Old Testament Reading: Zechariah 6:1–7:14

### A Vision of Four Chariots

<sup>1</sup>Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots came out from between two mountains. And the mountains were mountains of bronze. <sup>2</sup>The first chariot had red horses, the second black horses, <sup>3</sup>the third white horses, and the fourth chariot dappled horses—all of them strong. <sup>4</sup>Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” <sup>5</sup>And the angel answered and said to me, “These are going out to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the LORD of all the earth. <sup>6</sup>The chariot with the black horses goes toward the north country, the white ones go after them, and the dappled ones go toward the south country.” <sup>7</sup>When the strong horses came out, they were impatient to go and patrol the earth. And he said, “Go, patrol the earth.” So they patrolled the earth. <sup>8</sup>Then he cried to me, “Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country.”

### The Crown and the Temple

<sup>9</sup>And the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>10</sup>“Take from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon, and go the same day to the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah. <sup>11</sup>Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. <sup>12</sup>And say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. <sup>13</sup>It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne.

And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.’” <sup>14</sup>And the crown shall be in the temple of the LORD as a reminder to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah.

<sup>15</sup>“And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD. And you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And this shall come to pass, if you will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

### A Call for Justice and Mercy

<sup>7:1</sup>In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. <sup>2</sup>Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech and their men to entreat the favor of the LORD, <sup>3</sup>saying to the priests of the house of the LORD of hosts and the prophets, “Should I weep and abstain in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?”

<sup>4</sup>Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me: <sup>5</sup>“Say to all the people of the land and the priests, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted? <sup>6</sup>And when you eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves? <sup>7</sup>Were not these the words that the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, with her cities around her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited?”

<sup>8</sup>And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, <sup>9</sup>“Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, <sup>10</sup>do not oppress

the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.”<sup>11</sup> But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear.<sup>12</sup> They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the LORD of hosts.<sup>13</sup> “As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear,” says the LORD of hosts,<sup>14</sup> “and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known. Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and the pleasant land was made desolate.”

**New Testament Reading:  
Romans 16:17–27**

Final Instructions and Greetings

<sup>17</sup>I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.<sup>18</sup> For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.<sup>19</sup> For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.<sup>20</sup> The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

<sup>21</sup>Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

<sup>22</sup>I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

<sup>23</sup>Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.

Doxology

<sup>25</sup>Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages<sup>26</sup> but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—<sup>27</sup>to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

**Writing**

Some one perhaps will ask, “Since the canon of Scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself for everything, and more than sufficient, what need is there to join with it the authority of the Church’s interpretation?” For this reason—because, owing to the depth of Holy Scripture, all do not accept it in one and the same sense, but one understands its words in one way, another in another, so that it seems to be capable of as many interpretations as there are interpreters. . . .

Moreover, in the catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all. For that is truly and in the strictest sense “catholic,” which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. We shall follow universality if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole Church throughout the world confesses;

antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors.

What, then, will a catholic Christian do if a small portion of the Church have cut itself off from the communion of the universal faith? What, surely, but prefer the soundness of the whole body to the unsoundness of a pestilent and corrupt member? What, if some novel contagion seek to infect not merely an insignificant portion of the Church, but the whole? Then it will be his care to cleave to antiquity, which at this day cannot possibly be seduced by any fraud of novelty.

—Vincent of Lerins

### Hymnody

Cure Your children's warring madness;  
Bend our pride to Your control;  
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness,  
Rich in things and poor in soul.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage  
Lest we miss Your kingdom's goal,  
Lest we miss Your kingdom's goal.

—God of Grace and God of Glory  
(LSB 850:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and merciful God, it is by Your grace that we live as Your people who offer acceptable service. Grant that we may walk by faith, and not by sight, in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns

with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C72)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism V 15–30

## 29 JANUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD,  
for | he is good,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!
- <sup>2</sup> Let the redeemed of the LORD | say so,\*  
whom he has redeemed from | trouble
- <sup>3</sup> and gathered in | from the lands,\*  
from the east and from the west, from  
the north and | from the south.
- <sup>4</sup> Some wandered in | desert wastes,\*  
finding no way to a city to | dwell in;
- <sup>5</sup> hungry and | thirsty,\*  
their soul fainted with- | in them.
- <sup>6</sup> Then they cried to the LORD  
in their | trouble,\*  
and he delivered them  
from | their distress.
- <sup>7</sup> He led them by a | straight way\*  
till they reached a city to | dwell in.
- <sup>8</sup> Let them thank the LORD  
for his | steadfast love,\*  
for his wondrous works  
to the chil- | dren of men!
- <sup>9</sup> For he satisfies the | longing soul,\*  
and the hungry soul  
he fills | with good things.  
—Psalm 107:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 107*

## Old Testament Reading: Zechariah 8:1–23

The Coming Peace and Prosperity of Zion

<sup>1</sup>And the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. <sup>3</sup>Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain. <sup>4</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. <sup>5</sup>And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. <sup>6</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts: If it is marvelous in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvelous in my sight, declares the LORD of hosts? <sup>7</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts: behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, <sup>8</sup>and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.”

<sup>9</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets who were present on the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built. <sup>10</sup>For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for beast, neither was there any safety from the foe for him who went out or came in, for I set every man against his neighbor. <sup>11</sup>But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares the LORD of hosts. <sup>12</sup>For there shall be a sowing of peace. The vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall

give its produce, and the heavens shall give their dew. And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. <sup>13</sup>And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong.”

<sup>14</sup>For thus says the LORD of hosts: “As I purposed to bring disaster to you when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts, <sup>15</sup>so again have I purposed in these days to bring good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. <sup>16</sup>These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; <sup>17</sup>do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the LORD.”

<sup>18</sup>And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, <sup>19</sup>“Thus says the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace.

<sup>20</sup>“Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. <sup>21</sup>The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD and to seek the LORD of hosts; I myself am going.’ <sup>22</sup>Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. <sup>23</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”

## New Testament Reading: 2 Timothy 1:1–18

### Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

<sup>2</sup>To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You

<sup>3</sup>I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. <sup>4</sup>As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. <sup>5</sup>I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. <sup>6</sup>For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, <sup>7</sup>for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

<sup>8</sup>Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, <sup>9</sup>who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, <sup>10</sup>and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, <sup>11</sup>for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, <sup>12</sup>which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. <sup>13</sup>Follow

the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup>By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

<sup>15</sup>You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. <sup>16</sup>May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, <sup>17</sup>but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me—<sup>18</sup>may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day!—and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

### Writing

This is a confirmation of the preceding promise and is meant to say this: “What I am promising you now seems impossible to you, because there are so few of you and things are proceeding so haltingly. But My Word shall be true, for I will and can indeed make your numbers great, namely, in this way: I will bring My people here from the east country and from the west country, where they are captives and are scattered about, so that they may live in Jerusalem. And there they shall be My people, and I shall be their God, in faithfulness and righteousness; that is, they shall serve Me in true faith and life, and I in turn will show Myself as their true God with mercy and help, and I will no longer be their judge in wrath and punishment as I had been before, when they did not want to be My people in faithfulness and righteousness either.”

And note here very carefully the two words “in faithfulness and in righteousness.”

For God does not like hypocrites nor does He desire to be the God of the wicked. These indeed would like it if He were a God in riches and honor, that is, if He would make them rich and glorious in the eyes of the world—let piety and righteousness remain where they will. No, He is not a mammon, or a god of the belly. He desires to be a God in faithfulness and righteousness and also to have a people that loves faithfulness and righteousness. Temporal goods, however, shall indeed come, as will follow. “In faithfulness” means that the people are righteous toward God and not hypocritical, and that they serve God in true faith and sincerity; “in righteousness” here means the love and mercy with which they do right toward their neighbor. On these two commandments depends the whole life of a holy people.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Lo, the hosts of evil round us  
 Scorn the Christ, assail His ways!  
 From the fears that long have bound us  
 Free our hearts to faith and praise.  
 Grant us wisdom, grant us courage  
 For the living of these days,  
 For the living of these days.

—God of Grace and God of Glory  
 (LSB 850:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You show mercy to Your people in all their troubles. Grant us always to recognize Your goodness, give thanks for Your compassion, and praise Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our

Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (C81)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism V 31–41

## 30 JANUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>18</sup> Behold, the eye of the LORD  
 is on those who | fear him,\*  
 on those who hope in his | steadfast love,  
<sup>19</sup> that he may deliver their | soul from death\*  
 and keep them alive in | famine.  
<sup>20</sup> Our soul waits | for the LORD;\*  
 he is our help | and our shield.  
<sup>21</sup> For our heart is | glad in him,\*  
 because we trust in his | holy name.  
<sup>22</sup> Let your steadfast love,  
 O LORD, be up- | on us,\*  
 even as we | hope in you.  
 —Psalm 33:18–22

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 33*

### Old Testament Reading: Zechariah 9:1–17

Judgment on Israel's Enemies

<sup>1</sup>The burden of the word of the LORD  
 is against the land of Hadrach  
 and Damascus is its resting place.

For the LORD has an eye on mankind  
 and on all the tribes of Israel,

<sup>2</sup>and on Hamath also, which borders on it,  
 Tyre and Sidon, though  
 they are very wise.

<sup>3</sup>Tyre has built herself a rampart  
 and heaped up silver like dust,

and fine gold like the mud of the streets.

<sup>4</sup>But behold, the LORD will strip her  
of her possessions  
and strike down her power on the sea,  
and she shall be devoured by fire.

<sup>5</sup>Ashkelon shall see it, and be afraid;  
Gaza too, and shall writhe in anguish;  
Ekron also, because its hopes  
are confounded.

The king shall perish from Gaza;  
Ashkelon shall be uninhabited;

<sup>6</sup>a mixed people shall dwell in Ashdod,  
and I will cut off the pride of Philistia.

<sup>7</sup>I will take away its blood from its mouth,  
and its abominations  
from between its teeth;

it too shall be a remnant for our God;  
it shall be like a clan in Judah,  
and Ekron shall be like the Jebusites.

<sup>8</sup>Then I will encamp at my house as a guard,  
so that none shall march to and fro;  
no oppressor shall again march over them,  
for now I see with my own eyes.

The Coming King of Zion

<sup>9</sup>Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;  
righteous and having salvation is he,  
humble and mounted on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

<sup>10</sup>I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
and the war horse from Jerusalem;  
and the battle bow shall be cut off,  
and he shall speak peace to the nations;  
his rule shall be from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends  
of the earth.

<sup>11</sup>As for you also, because of the blood  
of my covenant with you,

I will set your prisoners free from the  
waterless pit.

<sup>12</sup>Return to your stronghold,  
O prisoners of hope;  
today I declare that I will restore  
to you double.

<sup>13</sup>For I have bent Judah as my bow;  
I have made Ephraim its arrow.

I will stir up your sons, O Zion,  
against your sons, O Greece,  
and wield you like a warrior's sword.

The LORD Will Save His People

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD will appear over them,  
and his arrow will go forth like lightning;  
the Lord GOD will sound the trumpet  
and will march forth in the whirlwinds  
of the south.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD of hosts will protect them,  
and they shall devour,  
and tread down the sling stones,  
and they shall drink and roar  
as if drunk with wine,  
and be full like a bowl,  
drenched like the corners of the altar.

<sup>16</sup>On that day the LORD their God will save  
them,  
as the flock of his people;  
for like the jewels of a crown  
they shall shine on his land.

<sup>17</sup>For how great is his goodness,  
and how great his beauty!  
Grain shall make  
the young men flourish,  
and new wine the young women.

### **New Testament Reading:** **2 Timothy 2:1–26**

A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus

<sup>1</sup>You then, my child, be strengthened by  
the grace that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup>and what

you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. <sup>3</sup>Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. <sup>4</sup>No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. <sup>5</sup>An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. <sup>6</sup>It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. <sup>7</sup>Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

<sup>8</sup>Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, <sup>9</sup>for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! <sup>10</sup>Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. <sup>11</sup>The saying is trustworthy, for:

If we have died with him,  
we will also live with him;  
<sup>12</sup>if we endure, we will also reign  
with him;  
if we deny him, he also will deny us;  
<sup>13</sup>if we are faithless, he remains faithful—

for he cannot deny himself.

A Worker Approved by God

<sup>14</sup>Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. <sup>15</sup>Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. <sup>16</sup>But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, <sup>17</sup>and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, <sup>18</sup>who have swerved from the truth,

saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. <sup>19</sup>But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

<sup>20</sup>Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. <sup>21</sup>Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

<sup>22</sup>So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. <sup>23</sup>Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. <sup>24</sup>And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, <sup>25</sup>correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, <sup>26</sup>and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

## Writing

Just as the truth of this divine promise [baptism], once pronounced over us, continues until death, so our faith in it ought never to cease, but to be nourished and strengthened until death by the continual remembrance of this promise made to us in baptism. Therefore, when we rise from our sins or repent, we are merely returning to the power and the faith of baptism from which we fell, and finding our way back to the

promise then made to us, which we deserted when we sinned. For the truth of the promise once made remains steadfast, always ready to receive us back with open arms when we return. . . .

It will therefore be no small gain to a penitent to remember above all his baptism, and, confidently calling to mind the divine promise which he has forsaken, acknowledge that promise before his Lord, rejoicing that he is still within the fortress of salvation because he has been baptized, and abhorring his wicked ingratitude in falling away from its faith and truth. His heart will find wonderful comfort and will be encouraged to hope for mercy when he considers that the promise which God made to him, which cannot possibly lie, is still unbroken and unchanged, and indeed, cannot be changed by sins, as Paul says (II Tim. 2[:13]): “If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.” This truth of God, I say, will sustain him, so that if all else should fail, this truth, if he believes in it, will not fail him. In it the penitent has a shield against all assaults of the scornful enemy, an answer to the sins that disturb his conscience, an antidote for the dread of death and judgment, and a comfort in every temptation—namely, this one truth—when he says: “God is faithful in his promises [Heb. 10:23; 11:11], and I received his sign in baptism. If God is for me, who is against me?” [Rom. 8:1].

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Run the straight race through  
God’s good grace;  
Lift up your eyes, and seek His face.  
Life with its way before us lies;  
Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.  
—Fight the Good Fight (*LSB* 664:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, our refuge and strength, the author of all godliness, hear the devout prayers of Your Church, especially in times of persecution, and grant that what we ask in faith we may obtain; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H82)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism V 42–57

## 31 JANUARY

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD!  
Praise the name | of the LORD,\*  
give praise, O servants | of the LORD,
- <sup>2</sup> who stand in the house | of the LORD,\*  
in the courts of the house | of our God!
- <sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD, for the | LORD is good;\*  
sing to his name, for it is | pleasant!
- <sup>4</sup> For the LORD has chosen Jacob | for himself,\*  
Israel as his own pos- | session.
- <sup>5</sup> For I know that the | LORD is great,\*  
and that our Lord is a- | bove all gods.
- <sup>6</sup> Whatever the LORD pleases,  
he does, in heaven | and on earth,\*

in the seas and | all deeps.

<sup>7</sup>He it is who makes the clouds rise  
at the end | of the earth,\*  
who makes lightnings for the rain and  
brings forth the wind from  
his | storehouses.

<sup>13</sup>Your name, O LORD, endures for- | ever,\*  
your renown, O LORD,  
throughout all | ages.

<sup>14</sup>For the LORD will vindicate his | people\*  
and have compassion on his | servants.  
—Psalm 135:1–7, 13–14

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 68*

**Old Testament Reading:  
Zechariah 10:1–11:3**

The Restoration for Judah and Israel

<sup>1</sup>Ask rain from the LORD  
in the season of the spring rain,  
from the LORD who makes the storm clouds,  
and he will give them showers of rain,  
to everyone the vegetation in the field.

<sup>2</sup>For the household gods utter nonsense,  
and the diviners see lies;  
they tell false dreams  
and give empty consolation.

Therefore the people wander like sheep;  
they are afflicted for lack of a shepherd.

<sup>3</sup>“My anger is hot against the shepherds,  
and I will punish the leaders;  
for the LORD of hosts cares for his flock, the  
house of Judah,  
and will make them like his majestic  
steed in battle.

<sup>4</sup>From him shall come the cornerstone,  
from him the tent peg,  
from him the battle bow,  
from him every ruler—all of them  
together.

<sup>5</sup>They shall be like mighty men in battle,

trampling the foe in the mud of the  
streets;

they shall fight because the LORD is with  
them,  
and they shall put to shame the riders on  
horses.

<sup>6</sup>“I will strengthen the house of Judah,  
and I will save the house of Joseph.

I will bring them back because I have  
compassion on them,  
and they shall be as though I had not  
rejected them,  
for I am the LORD their God and I will  
answer them.

<sup>7</sup>Then Ephraim shall become like  
a mighty warrior,  
and their hearts shall be glad  
as with wine.

Their children shall see it and be glad;  
their hearts shall rejoice in the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>“I will whistle for them and gather them in,  
for I have redeemed them,  
and they shall be as many  
as they were before.

<sup>9</sup>Though I scattered them among the nations,  
yet in far countries  
they shall remember me,  
and with their children they shall live  
and return.

<sup>10</sup>I will bring them home  
from the land of Egypt,  
and gather them from Assyria,  
and I will bring them to the land  
of Gilead and to Lebanon,  
till there is no room for them.

<sup>11</sup>He shall pass through the sea of troubles  
and strike down the waves of the sea,  
and all the depths of the Nile shall be  
dried up.

The pride of Assyria shall be laid low,  
and the scepter of Egypt shall depart.

<sup>12</sup>I will make them strong in the LORD,  
and they shall walk in his name,”  
declares the LORD.

The Flock Doomed to Slaughter

<sup>11:1</sup>Open your doors, O Lebanon,  
that the fire may devour your cedars!

<sup>2</sup>Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen,  
for the glorious trees are ruined!

Wail, oaks of Bashan,  
for the thick forest has been felled!

<sup>3</sup>The sound of the wail of the shepherds,  
for their glory is ruined!

The sound of the roar of the lions,  
for the thicket of the Jordan is ruined!

## New Testament Reading: 2 Timothy 3:1–17

Godlessness in the Last Days

<sup>1</sup>But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. <sup>2</sup>For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, <sup>4</sup>treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup>having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. <sup>6</sup>For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, <sup>7</sup>always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. <sup>8</sup>Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. <sup>9</sup>But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

All Scripture Is Breathed Out by God

<sup>10</sup>You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, <sup>11</sup>my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.

<sup>12</sup>Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, <sup>13</sup>while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

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

## Writing

Christian soul, soul raised from sad death, soul redeemed from miserable slavery and set free by the blood of God: rouse your mind, dwell upon your resurrection from the dead, and ponder well the history of your redemption and your liberation. Consider where the strength of your salvation comes from, and what it is. Employ yourself in musing on it, delight yourself in contemplating it; shake off your sloth, do violence to your heart, bend your whole mind to it. Taste the goodness of your Redeemer, break forth in fires of love to your Savior. Bite the honeycomb of the words that tell of it, suck their savor more pleasant than honey, swallow their

wholesome sweetness. Bite by thinking, suck by understanding, swallow as you love and rejoice. Gladden yourself by biting, exult in sucking, fill yourself to the full with joy by swallowing. Where and what is the strength and power of your salvation? Christ, Christ assuredly has raised you up again. He, the Good Samaritan, has healed you. He, the good friend, has redeemed you with His life and set you free. Christ, I say, Christ is He. And so the strength of your salvation is the strength of Christ. . . .

Christian soul, here is the strength of your salvation; here is the cause of your freedom; here is the price of your redemption. You were a captive, but you have been redeemed; you were a slave, but [by Him] are made free. And so, an exile, you are brought home; lost, you are reclaimed; and dead, you are restored to life. This let your heart taste, O man, this let it suck, this let it swallow, while your mouth receives the body and blood of your Redeemer. In this present life make this your daily bread, your nourishment, your support in pilgrimage. For by means of this, this and nothing else, you remain in Christ and Christ in you, and in the life to come your joy shall be full.

—Anselm

### Hymnody

Help, Lord Jesus, help him nourish  
 All our children with Your Word  
 That in fervent love they serve You  
 Till in heav'n their song is heard.  
 Boundless blessings, Lord, bestow  
 On his faithful toil below  
 Till by grace to him be given  
 His reward, the crown of heaven.

—Send, O Lord, Your Holy Spirit  
 (LSB 681:3)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, whose never-failing providence orders all things both in heaven and earth, we humbly implore You to put away from us all hurtful things and to give us those things that are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H67)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism V 58–74

## 1 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>To you, O LORD, I call; my rock,  
 be not | deaf to me,\*  
 lest, if you be silent to me, I become like  
 those who go down | to the pit.

<sup>2</sup>Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy,  
 when I cry to | you for help,\*  
 when I lift up my hands toward  
 your most holy sanctu- | ary.

<sup>3</sup>Do not drag me off with the wicked,  
 with the workers of | evil,\*  
 who speak peace with their neighbors  
 while evil is | in their hearts.

<sup>4</sup>Give to them according to their work  
 and according to the evil | of their deeds,\*  
 give to them according to the work  
 of their hands; render them  
 their | due reward.

<sup>5</sup>Because they do not regard the works  
 of the LORD or the work | of his hands,\*  
 he will tear them down  
 and build them | up no more.

<sup>6</sup>Blessèd | be the LORD!\*

for he has heard the voice  
of my pleas for | mercy.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD is my strength and my shield; in  
him my heart trusts, and | I am helped;\*  
my heart exults, and with my song  
I give | thanks to him.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD is the strength of his | people;\*  
he is the saving refuge of his a- | nointed.

<sup>9</sup>Oh, save your people  
and bless your | heritage!\*  
Be their shepherd  
and carry them for- | ever.

—Psalm 28

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 48*

### Old Testament Reading: Zechariah 11:4–17

[The Flock Doomed to Slaughter]

<sup>4</sup>Thus said the LORD my God: “Become  
shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter.  
<sup>5</sup>Those who buy them slaughter them and go  
unpunished, and those who sell them say,  
‘Blessed be the LORD, I have become rich,’  
and their own shepherds have no pity on  
them. <sup>6</sup>For I will no longer have pity on the  
inhabitants of this land, declares the LORD.  
Behold, I will cause each of them to fall  
into the hand of his neighbor, and each into  
the hand of his king, and they shall crush  
the land, and I will deliver none from their  
hand.”

<sup>7</sup>So I became the shepherd of the flock  
doomed to be slaughtered by the sheep  
traders. And I took two staves, one I named  
Favor, the other I named Union. And I  
tended the sheep. <sup>8</sup>In one month I destroyed  
the three shepherds. But I became impatient  
with them, and they also detested me. <sup>9</sup>So I  
said, “I will not be your shepherd. What is  
to die, let it die. What is to be destroyed, let

it be destroyed. And let those who are left  
devour the flesh of one another.” <sup>10</sup>And I  
took my staff Favor, and I broke it, annulling  
the covenant that I had made with all the  
peoples. <sup>11</sup>So it was annulled on that day,  
and the sheep traders, who were watching  
me, knew that it was the word of the LORD.  
<sup>12</sup>Then I said to them, “If it seems good to  
you, give me my wages; but if not, keep  
them.” And they weighed out as my wages  
thirty pieces of silver. <sup>13</sup>Then the LORD said to  
me, “Throw it to the potter”—the lordly price  
at which I was priced by them. So I took the  
thirty pieces of silver and threw them into  
the house of the LORD, to the potter. <sup>14</sup>Then I  
broke my second staff Union, annulling the  
brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

<sup>15</sup>Then the LORD said to me, “Take once  
more the equipment of a foolish shepherd.  
<sup>16</sup>For behold, I am raising up in the land a  
shepherd who does not care for those being  
destroyed, or seek the young or heal the  
maimed or nourish the healthy, but devours  
the flesh of the fat ones, tearing off even their  
hoofs.

<sup>17</sup>“Woe to my worthless shepherd,  
who deserts the flock!  
May the sword strike his arm  
and his right eye!  
Let his arm be wholly withered,  
his right eye utterly blinded!”

### New Testament Reading: 2 Timothy 4:1–18

Preach the Word

<sup>1</sup>I charge you in the presence of God  
and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the  
living and the dead, and by his appearing  
and his kingdom: <sup>2</sup>preach the word; be  
ready in season and out of season; reprove,

rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. <sup>3</sup>For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup>and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. <sup>5</sup>As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

<sup>6</sup>For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup>I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup>Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

#### Personal Instructions

<sup>9</sup>Do your best to come to me soon. <sup>10</sup>For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. <sup>11</sup>Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. <sup>12</sup>Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. <sup>13</sup>When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. <sup>14</sup>Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. <sup>15</sup>Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. <sup>16</sup>At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! <sup>17</sup>But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued

from the lion's mouth. <sup>18</sup>The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

#### Writing

Let us then return from [the Communion] table like lions breathing fire, having become terrible to the devil; thinking on our Head [Christ] and on the love that He has shown for us. . . . Our Lord says: "I feed you with My own flesh, desiring that you all be nobly born, and holding forth good hopes for your future. . . . I have willed to become your Brother. For your sake, I shared in flesh and blood, and, in turn, I give you the flesh and the blood by which I became your kinsman." This blood causes the image of our King to be fresh within us. It produces beauty unspeakable and prevents the nobleness of our souls from wasting away. . . . It nourishes our souls and works in them a mighty power. This blood, if rightly taken, drives away devils, and keeps them far from us, while it calls the angels and the Lord of angels to us. For wherever they see the Lord's blood, devils flee and angels run together. This blood poured forth and washed all the world clean. St. Paul uttered many wise sayings concerning it in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This blood cleansed the secret place and the Holy of Holies. And if the type of this blood had such great power in the temple of the Hebrews, and in the midst of Egypt, when smeared on the doorposts, much more the reality! The type sanctified the golden altar. Without it [the blood of the sacrifices], the high priest dared not enter into the secret place. It even consecrated priests. It cleansed sins [in the Old Testament]. But if the blood [of the sacrifices] was but a type

and had such power, if death so shuddered at the shadow, tell me how would it not have dreaded the very reality? The blood [of Christ] is the salvation of our souls. By it the soul is washed, is beautiful, and is inflamed! This blood causes our understanding to be more bright than fire and our soul more beaming than gold. This blood was poured forth and opened heaven.

—John Chrysostom

### Hymnody

Guard us waking, guard us sleeping,  
And when we die,  
May we in Your mighty keeping  
All peaceful lie.  
When the last dread call shall wake us,  
Then, O Lord, do not forsake us,  
But to reign in glory take us  
With You on high.

—God, Who Made the Earth  
and Heaven (*LSB 877:3*)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, Your Son fought the good fight of faith and was obedient unto death, even death on the cross, pouring out His blood as a peace offering between You and us. Keep us faithful unto death so we may receive the crown of righteousness that the Righteous Judge will reward us with on that Day, having waited in hope and love for His appearing; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1139)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Large Catechism V 75–87

## 2 FEBRUARY

*The Purification of Mary  
and the Presentation of Our Lord*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> We give thanks to you, O God;  
we give thanks, for your | name is near.\*  
We recount your | wondrous deeds.
- <sup>2</sup> “At the set time that | I appoint\*  
I will judge with | equity.
- <sup>3</sup> When the earth totters,  
and all its in- | habitants,\*  
it is I who keep steady its | pillars.
- <sup>4</sup> I say to the boastful, | ‘Do not boast,’\*  
and to the wicked,  
‘Do not lift | up your horn;
- <sup>5</sup> do not lift up your | horn on high,\*  
or speak with | haughty neck.’ ”
- <sup>6</sup> For not from the east or | from the west\*  
and not from the wilderness  
comes | lifting up,
- <sup>7</sup> but it is God who executes | judgment,\*  
putting down one and  
lifting up an- | other.
- <sup>8</sup> For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup  
with foaming wine, well mixed,  
and he pours | out from it,\*  
and all the wicked of the earth shall  
drain it down | to the dregs.
- <sup>9</sup> But I will declare it for- | ever;\*  
I will sing praises to the God of | Jacob.
- <sup>10</sup> All the horns of the wicked I will | cut off,\*  
but the horns of the righteous  
shall be | lifted up.
- Psalm 75

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 104*

## Old Testament Reading: Zechariah 12:1–13:9

The LORD Will Give Salvation

<sup>1</sup>The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus declares the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him: <sup>2</sup>“Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples. The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. <sup>3</sup>On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it. <sup>4</sup>On that day, declares the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness. But for the sake of the house of Judah I will keep my eyes open, when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. <sup>5</sup>Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.’

<sup>6</sup>“On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves. And they shall devour to the right and to the left all the surrounding peoples, while Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem.

<sup>7</sup>“And the LORD will give salvation to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not surpass that of Judah. <sup>8</sup>On that day the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, going before them. <sup>9</sup>And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Him Whom They Have Pierced

<sup>10</sup>“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. <sup>11</sup>On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. <sup>12</sup>The land shall mourn, each family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>13</sup>the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; <sup>14</sup>and all the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves.

<sup>13:1</sup>“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

Idolatry Cut Off

<sup>2</sup>“And on that day, declares the LORD of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness. <sup>3</sup>And if anyone again prophesies, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the LORD.’ And his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies.

<sup>4</sup>“On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a hairy cloak in order to deceive, <sup>5</sup>but he will say, ‘I am no prophet, I

am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth.’<sup>6</sup> And if one asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your back?’ he will say, ‘The wounds I received in the house of my friends.’

The Shepherd Struck

<sup>7</sup>“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,  
against the man who stands  
next to me,”

declares the LORD of hosts.

“Strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep will be scattered;  
I will turn my hand against  
the little ones.

<sup>8</sup>In the whole land, declares the LORD,  
two thirds shall be cut off and perish,  
and one third shall be left alive.

<sup>9</sup>And I will put this third into the fire,  
and refine them as one refines silver,  
and test them as gold is tested.

They will call upon my name,  
and I will answer them.

I will say, ‘They are my people’;  
and they will say,  
‘The LORD is my God.’ ”

## New Testament Reading: Titus 1:1–2:6

Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, <sup>2</sup>in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began <sup>3</sup>and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;

<sup>4</sup>To Titus, my true child in a common faith:

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Qualifications for Elders

<sup>5</sup>This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—<sup>6</sup>if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. <sup>7</sup>For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, <sup>8</sup>but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

<sup>9</sup>He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

<sup>10</sup>For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. <sup>11</sup>They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. <sup>12</sup>One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” <sup>13</sup>This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, <sup>14</sup>not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. <sup>15</sup>To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. <sup>16</sup>They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

Teach Sound Doctrine

<sup>2</sup>1But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. <sup>2</sup>Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. <sup>3</sup>Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, <sup>4</sup>and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, <sup>5</sup>to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. <sup>6</sup>Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

**Writing**

After His circumcision, she next waits for the time of her purification. And when the days were fulfilled, and the fortieth was the full time, God the Word, who sits by the Father’s side, is carried up to Jerusalem and brought into the Father’s presence in human nature like ours and by the shadow of the law is numbered among the firstborn. For even before the incarnation the firstborn were holy and consecrated to God, being sacrificed to Him according to the law. O how great and wonderful is the plan of salvation! “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” He who is in the bosom of the Father, the Son who shares His throne and is coeternal with Him, by whom all things are divinely brought into existence, submitted nevertheless to the measure of human nature and even offered a sacrifice to His own Father, though adored by all and glorified with Him. And what did He offer? As the firstborn and a male pair of turtles, or two young doves, according to what the law prescribed. But what do the turtle and the dove signify? Come, then, and let us

examine this. The one, then, is the most noisy of the birds of the field, but the other is a mild and gentle creature. And such did the Savior of all become toward us, showing the most perfect gentleness, and like a turtle moreover soothing the world and filling His own vineyard, even us who believe in Him, with the sweet sound of His voice. For it is written in the Song of Songs, “The voice of the turtle has been heard in our land.” For Christ has spoken to us the divine message of the Gospel, which is for the salvation of the whole world.

—Cyril of Alexandria

**Hymnody**

O teach them with all diligence  
The truths of God’s own Word,  
To place in Him their confidence,  
To fear and trust their Lord.

—Let Children Hear the  
Mighty Deeds (*LSB* 867:4)

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty and ever-living God, as Your only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in the substance of our flesh, grant that we may be presented to You with pure and clean hearts; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F12)

**Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord**

Thirty-two days after Jesus’ circumcision and seventy weeks after the announcement of John’s birth to Zechariah by the angel Gabriel, the Lord comes to His temple to fulfill the Torah (Luke 2:22–38). The days are indeed fulfilled with the presentation.

Jesus' parents keep the Torah and fulfill it by bringing Jesus to His true home. Also, Jesus' parents offer the alternative sacrifice of two turtledoves or two pigeons. Leviticus 12:8 allows this instead of a lamb, since not everyone could afford a lamb (showing the poverty and humility of Joseph and Mary). Yet no lamb was necessary because already here at forty days old, Jesus is the Lamb brought to His temple for sacrifice. Simeon's Nunc Dimittis is a beautiful example of the immediate response to this inauguration of God's consolation and redemption in the Christ Child. Speaking to Mary, Simeon also prophesies about the destiny of the child.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles Preface 1–7

## 3 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Clap your hands, all | peoples!\*  
Shout to God with loud | songs of joy!
- <sup>2</sup> For the LORD, the Most High,  
is | to be feared,\*  
a great king over | all the earth.
- <sup>3</sup> He subdued peoples | under us,\*  
and nations un- | der our feet.
- <sup>4</sup> He chose our heritage | for us,\*  
the pride of Jacob | whom he loves.
- <sup>5</sup> God has gone up | with a shout,\*  
the LORD with the sound of a | trumpet.
- <sup>6</sup> Sing praises to God, sing | praises!\*  
Sing praises to our King, sing | praises!
- <sup>7</sup> For God is the King of | all the earth;\*  
sing praises | with a psalm!

<sup>8</sup> God reigns over the | nations;\*  
God sits on his | holy throne.

<sup>9</sup> The princes of the peoples gather  
as the people of the God of | Abraham.\*  
For the shields of the earth belong to  
God; he is highly ex- | alted!  
—Psalm 47

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 135*

### Old Testament Reading: Zechariah 14:1–21

The Coming Day of the LORD

<sup>1</sup>Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. <sup>2</sup>For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. <sup>3</sup>Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. <sup>4</sup>On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. <sup>5</sup>And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

<sup>6</sup>On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. <sup>7</sup>And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light.

<sup>8</sup>On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern

sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter.

<sup>9</sup>And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

<sup>10</sup>The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. <sup>11</sup>And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem shall dwell in security.

<sup>12</sup>And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.

<sup>13</sup>And on that day a great panic from the LORD shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other. <sup>14</sup>Even Judah will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance. <sup>15</sup>And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever beasts may be in those camps.

<sup>16</sup>Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths. <sup>17</sup>And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. <sup>18</sup>And if the family of Egypt does not go up and present themselves, then on them there shall be no

rain; there shall be the plague with which the Lord afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths. <sup>19</sup>This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.

<sup>20</sup>And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the LORD." And the pots in the house of the LORD shall be as the bowls before the altar. <sup>21</sup>And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy to the LORD of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the meat of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the LORD of hosts on that day.

### **New Testament Reading: Titus 2:7–3:15**

[Teach Sound Doctrine]

<sup>7</sup>Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, <sup>8</sup>and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. <sup>9</sup>Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, <sup>10</sup>not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup>waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup>who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

<sup>15</sup>Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

#### Be Ready for Every Good Work

<sup>3:1</sup>Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, <sup>2</sup>to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. <sup>3</sup>For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. <sup>4</sup>But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup>whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. <sup>8</sup>The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. <sup>9</sup>But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. <sup>10</sup>As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, <sup>11</sup>knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

#### Final Instructions and Greetings

<sup>12</sup>When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. <sup>13</sup>Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack

nothing. <sup>14</sup>And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

<sup>15</sup>All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.

#### Writing

It was highly necessary to instruct the people that the true worship and honor of Christ and of His Holy Sacrament does not consist in such external gestures or services alone, also that our dear Lord Christ did not institute this venerable Sacrament for the sake of seeing and worshiping or being present there for that purpose, but so that we would partake of it, as the Lord's words say, "Take, eat; take, drink," etc. These words have power and avail so much as to say, "This is My body; this is My blood; this do in remembrance of Me." . . . Therefore the Word is most important, through the power of which, from the institution of the Lord, the true body and blood of Christ are there. The Word teaches us what kind of treasure we have there, what we should use it for, and why Christ is there, so that true invocation and spiritual worship are enkindled in us. Now, here we are not saying that one should not worship our dear Lord Jesus Christ in this Sacrament, being present, or that one should not hold this Sacrament with all honor and reverence. On the contrary, since these divine, almighty, true words are believed, all of this follows of itself, and not only in external gestures but also both externally and, first and foremost, in the heart, spirit, and truth. On account of this, such adoration of Christ is not thereby cancelled, but much rather, confirmed. For

where the Word is rightly seen, considered, and believed, the adoration of the Sacrament will happen of itself. For whoever believes that Christ's body and blood are there (as there is plenty of evidence so to believe, and it is necessary so to believe), he cannot, to be sure, deny his reverence to the body and blood of Christ without sin. For I must confess that Christ is there when His body and blood are there. His words do not lie to me, and He is not separate from His body and blood.

—Georg von Anhalt

### Hymnody

Alleluia! Let praises ring!  
 Unto the Lamb of God we sing,  
 In whom we are elected.  
 He bought His Church with His own blood,  
 He cleansed her in that blessed flood,  
 And as His bride selected.

Holy, holy

Is our union

And communion.

His befriending

Gives us joy and peace unending.

—Alleluia! Let Praises Ring  
 (LSB 822:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord, we pray that Your grace may always go before and follow after us, that we may continually be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (H76)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles Preface 8–15

## 4 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>Unless the LORD builds the house,  
 those who build it la- | bor in vain.\*

Unless the LORD watches over the city,  
 the watchman stays a- | wake in vain.

<sup>2</sup>It is in vain that you rise up early and go late  
 to rest, eating the bread of | anxious toil;\*  
 for he gives to his be- | lovèd sleep.

<sup>3</sup>Behold, children are a heritage | from  
 the LORD,\*  
 the fruit of the womb | a reward.

<sup>4</sup>Like arrows in the hand of a | warrior\*  
 are the children | of one's youth.

<sup>5</sup>Blessèd is the man who fills  
 his quiver | with them!\*  
 He shall not be put to shame when he  
 speaks with his enemies | in the gate.

—Psalm 127

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 128*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 1:1–22

Job's Character and Wealth

<sup>1</sup>There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. <sup>2</sup>There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. <sup>3</sup>He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. <sup>4</sup>His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. <sup>5</sup>And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings

according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.

#### Satan Allowed to Test Job

<sup>6</sup>Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. <sup>7</sup>The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." <sup>8</sup>And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" <sup>9</sup>Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? <sup>10</sup>Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. <sup>11</sup>But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." <sup>12</sup>And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

#### Satan Takes Job's Property and Children

<sup>13</sup>Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, <sup>14</sup>and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, <sup>15</sup>and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." <sup>16</sup>While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up

the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." <sup>17</sup>While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." <sup>18</sup>While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, <sup>19</sup>and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

<sup>20</sup>Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. <sup>21</sup>And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

<sup>22</sup>In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

### New Testament Reading: John 1:1-18

#### The Word Became Flesh

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might

believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

<sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>(John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) <sup>16</sup>And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

## Writing

I. Our churches teach with common consent that the decree of the Council of Nicaea about the unity of the divine essence and the three persons is true. It is to be believed without any doubt. God is one divine essence who is eternal, without a body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. He is the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible [Nehemiah 9:6]. Yet there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit [Matthew 28:19].

These three persons are of the same essence and power. Our churches use the term *person* as the Fathers have used it. We use it to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.

Our churches condemn all heresies [Titus 3:10–11] that arose against this article [including those of the Manichaeans, the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Muslims, and Samosatenes].

III. Our churches teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God [John 1:14], assumed the human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So there are two natures—the divine and the human—inseparably joined in one person. There is one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. He did this to reconcile the Father to us and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of mankind [John 1:29].

He also descended into hell, and truly rose again on the third day. Afterward, He ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. There He forever reigns and has dominion over all creatures. He sanctifies those who believe in Him, by sending the Holy Spirit into their hearts to rule, comfort, and make them alive. He defends them against the devil and the power of sin.

The same Christ will openly come again to judge the living and the dead, and so forth, according to the Apostles’ Creed.

—Augsburg Confession I, III

## Hymnody

O Savior of our fallen race,  
 O Brightness of the Father's face,  
 O Son who shared the Father's might  
 Before the world knew day or night,  
 Alleluia!

—O Savior of Our Fallen Race  
 (LSB 403:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the prayers of Your people and grant us Your peace through all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L14)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles I and II I

## 5 FEBRUARY

*Jacob (Israel), Patriarch*

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be | put to shame;\*  
 in your righteousness de- | liver me!

<sup>2</sup>Incline your ear to me; rescue me | speedily!\*  
 Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to | save me!

<sup>23</sup>Love the LORD, all | you his saints!\*  
 The LORD preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who | acts in pride.

<sup>24</sup>Be strong, and let your heart take | courage,\*  
 all you who wait | for the LORD!  
 —Psalm 31:1–2, 23–24

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 88*

## Old Testament Reading: Job 2:1–3:10

Satan Attacks Job's Health

<sup>1</sup>Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." <sup>3</sup>And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason." <sup>4</sup>Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. <sup>5</sup>But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face." <sup>6</sup>And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life."

<sup>7</sup>So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. <sup>8</sup>And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes.

<sup>9</sup>Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." <sup>10</sup>But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive

good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Job's Three Friends

<sup>11</sup>Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him. <sup>12</sup>And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. <sup>13</sup>And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

Job Laments His Birth

<sup>3:1</sup>After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. <sup>2</sup>And Job said:

<sup>3</sup>"Let the day perish on which I was born,  
and the night that said,  
'A man is conceived.'

<sup>4</sup>Let that day be darkness!

May God above not seek it,  
nor light shine upon it.

<sup>5</sup>Let gloom and deep darkness claim it.

Let clouds dwell upon it;  
let the blackness of the day terrify it.

<sup>6</sup>That night—let thick darkness seize it!

Let it not rejoice among the days  
of the year;

let it not come into the number  
of the months.

<sup>7</sup>Behold, let that night be barren;

let no joyful cry enter it.

<sup>8</sup>Let those curse it who curse the day,  
who are ready to rouse up Leviathan.

<sup>9</sup>Let the stars of its dawn be dark;

let it hope for light, but have none,

nor see the eyelids of the morning,  
<sup>10</sup>because it did not shut the doors  
of my mother's womb,  
nor hide trouble from my eyes."

**New Testament Reading: John 1:19–34**

The Testimony of John the Baptist

<sup>19</sup>And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

<sup>24</sup>(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, <sup>27</sup>even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." <sup>28</sup>These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Behold, the Lamb of God

<sup>29</sup>The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

<sup>30</sup>This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' <sup>31</sup>I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." <sup>32</sup>And

John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup>I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup>And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

### Writing

John wishes to say: "Your lamb was taken from men, as Moses commanded in the Law of God (Ex. 12:3–5). But this is God's Lamb. The Easter lamb is a Lamb from God, not a lamb selected from the wethers [castrated male sheep]. The lamb of the Law was a shepherds' lamb or a man's lamb." John wants to say: "This is the true Lamb, which takes away the sin of the people. With your other lambs, sacrificed on the Passover festival, you did try to remove your sin; but you never succeeded. In this Lamb, born of a virgin, you will. It is not a natural lamb or whether referred to in the Law, and yet It is a lamb." For God prescribed that it was to be a Lamb that should be sacrificed and roasted on the cross for our sins. In other respects He was a man like all other human beings; but God made Him a Lamb which should bear the sins of all the world.

This is an extraordinarily free and comforting sermon on Christ, our Savior. Neither our thoughts nor our words can do the subject full justice, but in the life beyond it will redound to our eternal joy and bliss that the Son of God abased Himself so and burdened Himself with my sins. Yes, He assumes not only my sins but also those of the whole world, from Adam down to the very last mortal. These sins He takes upon

Himself; for these He is willing to suffer and die that our sins may be expunged and we may attain eternal life and blessedness. . . . Anyone who wishes to be saved must know that all his sins have been placed on the back of this Lamb! Therefore John points this Lamb out to his disciples, saying: "Do you want to know where the sins of the world are placed for forgiveness? . . . [I]f you really want to find a place where the sins of the world are exterminated and deleted, then cast your gaze upon the cross. The Lord placed all our sins on the back of this Lamb."

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

Behold the Lamb of God  
That bears the world's transgression,  
Whose sacrifice removes  
The devil's dread oppression.  
Behold the Lamb of God,  
Who takes away our sin,  
Who for our peace and joy  
Will full atonement win.

—When All the World Was Cursed  
(*LSB* 346:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, scepter that rises out of Jacob, Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, rule our hearts through Your suffering cross and forgive us our sins, that we may become partakers of Your divine life; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1140)

### Jacob (Israel), Patriarch

Jacob, the third of the three Hebrew patriarchs, was the younger of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. After wrestling with

the Angel of the Lord, Jacob, whose name means “deceiver,” was renamed *Israel*, which means “he strives with God” (Genesis 25:26; 32:28). His family life was filled with trouble, caused by his acts of deception toward his father and his brother, Esau, and his parental favoritism toward his son Joseph (see 31 March). Much of his adult life was spent grieving over the death of his beloved wife Rachel and the presumed death of Joseph, who had been appointed by the Egyptian pharaoh to be in charge of food distribution during a time of famine in the land. Prior to Jacob’s death, through the blessing of his sons, God gave the promise that the Messiah would come through the line of Jacob’s fourth son, Judah (Genesis 49).

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles II II 1–10

## 6 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> I cry a- | loud to God,\*  
aloud to God, and he will | hear me.
- <sup>2</sup> In the day of my trouble I | seek the Lord;\*  
in the night my hand is stretched out  
without wearying; my soul refuses  
to be | comforted.
- <sup>3</sup> When I remember | God, I moan;\*  
when I meditate, my | spirit faints. . . .
- <sup>7</sup> “Will the Lord spurn for- | ever,\*  
and never again be | favorable?
- <sup>8</sup> Has his steadfast love for- | ever ceased?\*
- Are his promises at an end | for all time?

- <sup>9</sup> Has God forgotten to be | gracious?\*
- Has he in anger shut up  
his com- | passion?”
- <sup>10</sup> Then I said, “I will ap- | peal to this,\*  
to the years of the right hand  
of the | Most High.”
- <sup>11</sup> I will remember the deeds | of the LORD;\*  
yes, I will remember your won- | ders  
of old.
- <sup>12</sup> I will ponder | all your work,\*  
and meditate on your | mighty deeds.
- <sup>15</sup> You with your arm redeemed  
your | people,\*  
the children of Jacob and | Joseph.  
—Psalm 77:1–3, 7–12, 15

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 74*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 3:11–26

[Job Laments His Birth]

- <sup>11</sup> “Why did I not die at birth,  
come out from the womb and expire?
- <sup>12</sup> Why did the knees receive me?  
Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?
- <sup>13</sup> For then I would have lain down  
and been quiet;  
I would have slept;  
then I would have been at rest,
- <sup>14</sup> with kings and counselors of the earth  
who rebuilt ruins for themselves,
- <sup>15</sup> or with princes who had gold,  
who filled their houses with silver.
- <sup>16</sup> Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child,  
as infants who never see the light?
- <sup>17</sup> There the wicked cease from troubling,  
and there the weary are at rest.
- <sup>18</sup> There the prisoners are at ease together;  
they hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
- <sup>19</sup> The small and the great are there,  
and the slave is free from his master.

- <sup>20</sup>“Why is light given to him who is in misery,  
and life to the bitter in soul,  
<sup>21</sup>who long for death, but it comes not,  
and dig for it more than  
for hidden treasures,  
<sup>22</sup>who rejoice exceedingly  
and are glad when they find the grave?  
<sup>23</sup>Why is light given to a man  
whose way is hidden,  
whom God has hedged in?  
<sup>24</sup>For my sighing comes instead of my bread,  
and my groanings  
are poured out like water.  
<sup>25</sup>For the thing that I fear comes upon me,  
and what I dread befalls me.  
<sup>26</sup>I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;  
I have no rest, but trouble comes.”

### New Testament Reading: John 1:35–51

#### Jesus Calls the First Disciples

<sup>35</sup>The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup>and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” <sup>37</sup>The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup>Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” <sup>39</sup>He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. <sup>40</sup>One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. <sup>41</sup>He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). <sup>42</sup>He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “So you are Simon the son of

John? You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

#### Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

<sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” <sup>44</sup>Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup>Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” <sup>46</sup>Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” <sup>47</sup>Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” <sup>48</sup>Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” <sup>49</sup>Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” <sup>50</sup>Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” <sup>51</sup>And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

### Writing

21. A theology of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theology of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.

This is clear: He who does not know Christ does not know God hidden in suffering. Therefore he prefers works to suffering, glow to the cross, strength to weakness, wisdom to folly, and, in general, good to evil. These are the people whom the apostle calls “enemies of the cross of

Christ” [Phil. 3:18], for they hate the cross and suffering and love works and the glory of works. Thus they call the good of the cross evil and the evil of a deed good. God can be found only in suffering and the cross, as has already been said. Therefore the friends of the cross say that the cross is good and works are evil, for through the cross works are destroyed and the old Adam, who is especially edified by works, is crucified. It is impossible for a person not to be puffed up by his good works unless he has first been deflated and destroyed by suffering and evil until he knows that he is worthless and that his works are not his but God’s.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

All praise, O Lord, for Andrew,  
The first to welcome You,  
Whose witness to his brother  
Named You Messiah true.  
May we, with hearts kept open  
To You throughout the year,  
Confess to friend and neighbor  
Your advent ever near.

—By All Your Saints in Warfare  
(LSB 517:5)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by Your grace the apostle Andrew obeyed the call of Your Son to be a disciple. Grant us also to follow the same Lord Jesus Christ in heart and life, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F01)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles II II 11–24

## 7 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was | in distress.\*

Be gracious to me and | hear my prayer!

<sup>2</sup> O men, how long shall my honor be turned | into shame?\*

How long will you love vain words and seek | after lies?

<sup>3</sup> But know that the LORD has set apart the godly | for himself;\*

the LORD hears when I | call to him.

<sup>4</sup> Be angry, and | do not sin;\*

ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be | silent.

<sup>5</sup> Offer right sacri- | fices,\*

and put your trust | in the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> There are many who say,

“Who will show | us some good?\*

Lift up the light of your face upon us, | O LORD!”

<sup>7</sup> You have put more joy | in my heart\*

than they have when their grain and | wine abound.

<sup>8</sup> In peace I will both lie | down and sleep;\*

for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in | safety.

—Psalm 4

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 18*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 4:1–21

Eliphaz Speaks: The Innocent Prosper

<sup>1</sup>Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

<sup>2</sup>“If one ventures a word with you, will you be impatient?

Yet who can keep from speaking?

<sup>3</sup>Behold, you have instructed many,  
and you have strengthened  
the weak hands.

<sup>4</sup>Your words have upheld him  
who was stumbling,  
and you have made firm  
the feeble knees.

<sup>5</sup>But now it has come to you,  
and you are impatient;  
it touches you, and you are dismayed.

<sup>6</sup>Is not your fear of God your confidence,  
and the integrity of your ways  
your hope?

<sup>7</sup>“Remember: who that was innocent  
ever perished?  
Or where were the upright cut off?

<sup>8</sup>As I have seen, those who plow iniquity  
and sow trouble reap the same.

<sup>9</sup>By the breath of God they perish,  
and by the blast of his anger  
they are consumed.

<sup>10</sup>The roar of the lion,  
the voice of the fierce lion,  
the teeth of the young lions are  
broken.

<sup>11</sup>The strong lion perishes for lack of prey,  
and the cubs of the lioness  
are scattered.

<sup>12</sup>“Now a word was brought to me  
stealthily;  
my ear received the whisper of it.

<sup>13</sup>Amid thoughts from visions  
of the night,  
when deep sleep falls on men,  
<sup>14</sup>dread came upon me, and trembling,  
which made all my bones shake.

<sup>15</sup>A spirit glided past my face;  
the hair of my flesh stood up.

<sup>16</sup>It stood still,  
but I could not discern its  
appearance.  
A form was before my eyes;  
there was silence,  
then I heard a voice:

<sup>17</sup>“Can mortal man be in the right  
before God?  
Can a man be pure before his Maker?  
<sup>18</sup>Even in his servants he puts no trust,  
and his angels he charges with error;  
<sup>19</sup>how much more those who dwell  
in houses of clay,  
whose foundation is in the dust,  
who are crushed like the moth.

<sup>20</sup>Between morning and evening  
they are beaten to pieces;  
they perish forever without  
anyone regarding it.

<sup>21</sup>Is not their tent-cord plucked up  
within them,  
do they not die, and that without  
wisdom?’ ”

### New Testament Reading: John 2:1–12

The Wedding at Cana

<sup>1</sup>On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup>Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. <sup>3</sup>When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” <sup>4</sup>And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” <sup>5</sup>His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

<sup>6</sup>Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup>And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take

it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. <sup>9</sup>When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup>and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” <sup>11</sup>This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

<sup>12</sup>After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.

## Writing

When Christ says of the bread, “This is My body, which is given for you,” they say, “This is not His body, which was given for you, but it is a reminder of His far-absent body.” We cannot allow the great treasure to be stolen from us which Christ bequeathed in His testament—His true body with which we were redeemed, and His precious blood with which we were washed from our sins—and put mere symbols in their place. Likewise, we cannot be convinced that it should be impossible for Christ our Lord, true God and man, to be present with His body and blood in the Supper and to distribute them, as the words of His testament read, without destroying His own body and, as our opponents say, being a liar. Likewise, we cannot concede that He with His assumed human body must be spatially present somewhere but cannot at the same time be in more than one place, though His words speak of this. For since He is almighty God and His assumed human nature is united to Him indivisibly and is also exalted

to the right hand of the power of God, we have no doubt that He can do everything with His body that He wants and that He has promised to do with it in His Word.

—Timotheus Kirchner

## Hymnody

Lord, when You came as welcome guest  
To Cana’s wedding feast,  
The bridal pair, divinely blest,  
Found all their joy increased.

—Lord, When You Came as Welcome  
Guest (*LSB* 859:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You created man and woman and joined them together in holy marriage, thereby reflecting the mystical union between Christ and His bride, the Church. By Your infinite goodness, let Your blessing rest upon all husbands and wives, that they may live together in Your glory in this life and with joy may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (530)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles II II 25–29 and II III

## 8 FEBRUARY

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Save me, | O God!\*

For the waters have come up | to my neck.

<sup>2</sup> I sink in deep mire,

where there is no | foothold;\*

I have come into deep waters,

and the flood sweeps | over me.

<sup>3</sup>I am weary with my crying out;  
 my | throat is parched.\*  
 My eyes grow dim with waiting | for  
 my God.

<sup>4</sup>More in number than the hairs | of my head\*  
 are those who hate me with- | out cause;  
 mighty are those who would destroy me,  
 those who attack | me with lies.\*  
 What I did not steal must I | now restore?

<sup>8</sup>I have become a stranger to my | brothers,\*  
 an alien to my | mother's sons.

<sup>9</sup>For zeal for your house has con- | sumed  
 me,\*  
 and the reproaches of those who  
 reproach you have fall- | en on me.

<sup>24</sup>Pour out your indignation up- | on them,\*  
 and let your burning anger  
 over- | take them.

<sup>29</sup>But I am afflicted | and in pain;\*  
 let your salvation, O God,  
 set | me on high!

<sup>30</sup>I will praise the name of God | with a song;\*  
 I will magnify him with thanks- | giving.  
 —Psalm 69:1–4, 8–9, 24, 29–30

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 122*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 5:1–27

[Eliphaz Speaks: The Innocent Prosper]

<sup>1</sup>“Call now; is there anyone  
 who will answer you?  
 To which of the holy ones will you turn?

<sup>2</sup>Surely vexation kills the fool,  
 and jealousy slays the simple.

<sup>3</sup>I have seen the fool taking root,  
 but suddenly I cursed his dwelling.

<sup>4</sup>His children are far from safety;  
 they are crushed in the gate,  
 and there is no one to deliver them.

<sup>5</sup>The hungry eat his harvest,  
 and he takes it even out of thorns,

and the thirsty pant after his wealth.

<sup>6</sup>For affliction does not come from the dust,  
 nor does trouble sprout from the ground,  
<sup>7</sup>but man is born to trouble  
 as the sparks fly upward.

<sup>8</sup>“As for me, I would seek God,  
 and to God would I commit my cause,  
<sup>9</sup>who does great things and unsearchable,  
 marvelous things without number:  
<sup>10</sup>he gives rain on the earth  
 and sends waters on the fields;  
<sup>11</sup>he sets on high those who are lowly,  
 and those who mourn are lifted to safety.

<sup>12</sup>He frustrates the devices of the crafty,  
 so that their hands achieve no success.

<sup>13</sup>He catches the wise in their own craftiness,  
 and the schemes of the wily are brought  
 to a quick end.

<sup>14</sup>They meet with darkness in the daytime  
 and grope at noonday as in the night.

<sup>15</sup>But he saves the needy  
 from the sword of their mouth  
 and from the hand of the mighty.

<sup>16</sup>So the poor have hope,  
 and injustice shuts her mouth.

<sup>17</sup>“Behold, blessed is the one  
 whom God reproves;  
 therefore despise not the discipline  
 of the Almighty.

<sup>18</sup>For he wounds, but he binds up;  
 he shatters, but his hands heal.

<sup>19</sup>He will deliver you from six troubles;  
 in seven no evil shall touch you.

<sup>20</sup>In famine he will redeem you from death,  
 and in war from the power of the sword.

<sup>21</sup>You shall be hidden from the lash  
 of the tongue,  
 and shall not fear destruction  
 when it comes.

<sup>22</sup>At destruction and famine you shall laugh,

and shall not fear the beasts of the earth.

<sup>23</sup>For you shall be in league with the stones of the field,

and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.

<sup>24</sup>You shall know that your tent is at peace, and you shall inspect your fold and miss nothing.

<sup>25</sup>You shall know also that your offspring shall be many, and your descendants as the grass of the earth.

<sup>26</sup>You shall come to your grave in ripe old age, like a sheaf gathered up in its season.

<sup>27</sup>Behold, this we have searched out; it is true. Hear, and know it for your good.”

### New Testament Reading: John 2:13–25

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

<sup>13</sup>The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. <sup>15</sup>And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup>And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.” <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

<sup>18</sup>So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” <sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” <sup>20</sup>The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” <sup>21</sup>But he was speaking about

the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup>When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Jesus Knows What Is in Man

<sup>23</sup>Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. <sup>24</sup>But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people <sup>25</sup>and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

### Writing

[The fourth petition of the Lord’s Prayer] is especially directed also against our chief enemy, the devil. For all his thought and desire is to deprive us of all that we have from God or to hinder it. He is not satisfied to obstruct and destroy spiritual government by leading souls astray with his lies and bringing them under his power. He also prevents and hinders the stability of all government and honorable, peaceable relations on earth. There he causes so much contention, murder, treason, and war. He also causes lightning and hail to destroy grain and cattle, to poison the air, and so on. In short, he is sorry if anyone has a morsel of bread from God and eats it in peace. If it were in his power and our prayer (next to God) did not prevent him, we would not keep a straw in the field, a farthing in the house, yes, not even our life for an hour. This is especially true of those who have God’s Word and would like to be Christians. . . .

God wishes to show us how He cares for us in all our need and faithfully provides also for our earthly support. He abundantly

grants and preserves these things, even for the wicked and rogues [Matthew 5:45]. Yet, He wishes that we pray for these goods in order that we may recognize that we receive them from His hand and may feel His fatherly goodness toward us in them [Psalm 104:28; 145:16]. For when He withdraws His hand, nothing can prosper or be maintained in the end. Indeed, we daily see this and experience it. How much trouble there is now in the world only on account of bad coins, daily oppression, raising of prices in common trade, and bargaining and labor by those who greedily oppress the poor and deprive them of their daily bread! This we must suffer indeed. But let such people take care so that they do not lose the benefits of common intercession. Let them beware lest this petition in the Lord's Prayer speak against them.

—Large Catechism III 80–84

### Hymnody

To this temple, where we call You,  
Come, O Lord of hosts, and stay;  
Come with all Your loving-kindness,  
Hear Your people as they pray;  
And Your fullest benediction  
Shed within these walls today.

—Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation  
(LSB 909:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns

with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L25)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles II IV 1–9

## 9 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>The LORD is my | shepherd;\*  
I | shall not want.
- <sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green | pastures.\*  
He leads me beside still | waters.
- <sup>3</sup>He re- | stores my soul.\*  
He leads me in paths of righteousness for  
his | name's sake.
- <sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for  
you are | with me;\*  
your rod and your staff, they | comfort  
me.
- <sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the  
presence of my | enemies;\*  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup | overflows.  
—Psalm 23:1–5

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 87*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 6:1–13

Job Replies: My Complaint Is Just

<sup>1</sup>Then Job answered and said:

<sup>2</sup>“Oh that my vexation were weighed,  
and all my calamity laid  
in the balances!

<sup>3</sup>For then it would be heavier  
than the sand of the sea;  
therefore my words have been rash.

<sup>4</sup>For the arrows of the Almighty  
are in me;  
    my spirit drinks their poison;  
    the terrors of God are arrayed  
    against me.

<sup>5</sup>Does the wild donkey bray  
when he has grass,  
    or the ox low over his fodder?

<sup>6</sup>Can that which is tasteless be eaten  
without salt,  
    or is there any taste in the juice  
    of the mallow?

<sup>7</sup>My appetite refuses to touch them;  
they are as food that is loathsome  
to me.

<sup>8</sup>“Oh that I might have my request,  
    and that God would fulfill my hope,  
<sup>9</sup>that it would please God to crush me,  
    that he would let loose his hand  
    and cut me off!

<sup>10</sup>This would be my comfort;  
    I would even exult in pain  
    unsparing,  
    for I have not denied the words  
    of the Holy One.

<sup>11</sup>What is my strength, that I should wait?  
    And what is my end,  
    that I should be patient?

<sup>12</sup>Is my strength the strength of stones,  
or is my flesh bronze?

<sup>13</sup>Have I any help in me,  
    when resource is driven from me?

### New Testament Reading: John 3:1–21

You Must Be Born Again

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a man of the Pharisees  
named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>This  
man came to Jesus by night and said to him,  
“Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come  
from God, for no one can do these signs

that you do unless God is with him.” <sup>3</sup>Jesus  
answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you,  
unless one is born again he cannot see the  
kingdom of God.” <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him,  
“How can a man be born when he is old? Can  
he enter a second time into his mother’s womb  
and be born?” <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I  
say to you, unless one is born of water and the  
Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.  
<sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and  
that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do  
not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be  
born again.’ <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it wishes,  
and you hear its sound, but you do not know  
where it comes from or where it goes. So it is  
with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

<sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, “How can  
these things be?” <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, “Are  
you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not  
understand these things? <sup>11</sup>Truly, truly, I say  
to you, we speak of what we know, and bear  
witness to what we have seen, but you do not  
receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you  
earthly things and you do not believe, how  
can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?  
<sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except he  
who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.  
<sup>14</sup>And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the  
wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted  
up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have  
eternal life.

For God So Loved the World

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world, that he  
gave his only Son, that whoever believes  
in him should not perish but have eternal  
life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send his Son into the  
world to condemn the world, but in order  
that the world might be saved through him.  
<sup>18</sup>Whoever believes in him is not condemned,  
but whoever does not believe is condemned

already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup>And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup>For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

### Writing

My present enquiry is into the sense of *Only-begotten*, and the claim upon us which that sense may make. And first let us see whether the word means, as you assert, a perfect creature of God: *Only-begotten* being equivalent to perfect, and *Son* a synonym for creature. But John described the Only-begotten Son as God, not as a perfect creature. His words, “Which is in the bosom of the Father,” show that he anticipated these blasphemous designations. Indeed, he had heard his Lord say, “For God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” God, who loved the world, gave His Only-begotten Son as a manifest token of His love. If the evidence of His love is this, that He bestowed a creature upon creatures, gave a worldly being on the world’s behalf, granted one raised up from nothing for the redemption of objects equally raised up from nothing, this cheap and petty sacrifice is a poor assurance of His favor toward us. Gifts of price are the evidence of affection, the greatness of the surrender of the greatness of the love. God, who loved the world, gave not an adopted

Son, but His own, His Only-begotten. Here is personal interest, true Sonship, sincerity; not creation or adoption or pretence. Herein is the proof of His love and affection, that He gave His own, His Only-begotten Son.

—Hilary of Poitiers

### Hymnody

God loved the world so that He gave  
His only Son the lost to save,  
That all who would in Him believe  
Should everlasting life receive.

—God So Loved the World So  
That He Gave (*LSB* 571:1)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L24)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles II IV 10–16

## 10 FEBRUARY

*Silas, Fellow Worker of St. Peter and St. Paul*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, rebuke me not in your | anger,\*  
nor discipline me | in your wrath!

<sup>2</sup> For your arrows have sunk | into me,\*  
and your hand has come | down on me.

<sup>3</sup>There is no soundness in my flesh because  
of your indig- | nation;\*  
there is no health in my bones  
because | of my sin.

<sup>9</sup>O Lord, all my longing is be- | fore you;\*  
my sighing is not hid- | den from you.

<sup>10</sup>My heart throbs; my strength | fails me,\*  
and the light of my eyes—  
it also has | gone from me.

<sup>11</sup>My friends and companions stand  
aloof | from my plague,\*  
and my nearest kin stand | far off.

<sup>21</sup>Do not forsake me, | O LORD!\*  
O my God, be not | far from me!

<sup>22</sup>Make haste to | help me,\*  
O Lord, my sal- | vation!  
—Psalm 38:1–3, 6, 9–11, 21–22

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 38*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 6:14–30

[Job Replies: My Complaint Is Just]

<sup>14</sup>“He who withholds kindness from a friend  
forsakes the fear of the Almighty.

<sup>15</sup>My brothers are treacherous  
as a torrent-bed,  
as torrential streams that pass away,

<sup>16</sup>which are dark with ice,  
and where the snow hides itself.

<sup>17</sup>When they melt, they disappear;  
when it is hot, they vanish  
from their place.

<sup>18</sup>The caravans turn aside from their course;  
they go up into the waste and perish.

<sup>19</sup>The caravans of Tema look,  
the travelers of Sheba hope.

<sup>20</sup>They are ashamed because they  
were confident;  
they come there and are disappointed.

<sup>21</sup>For you have now become nothing;  
you see my calamity and are afraid.

<sup>22</sup>Have I said, ‘Make me a gift’?  
Or, ‘From your wealth offer  
a bribe for me’?

<sup>23</sup>Or, ‘Deliver me from the adversary’s hand’?  
Or, ‘Redeem me from the hand  
of the ruthless’?

<sup>24</sup>“Teach me, and I will be silent;  
make me understand  
how I have gone astray.

<sup>25</sup>How forceful are upright words!  
But what does reproof from you reprove?

<sup>26</sup>Do you think that you can reprove words,  
when the speech of a despairing man  
is wind?

<sup>27</sup>You would even cast lots over the fatherless,  
and bargain over your friend.

<sup>28</sup>“But now, be pleased to look at me,  
for I will not lie to your face.

<sup>29</sup>Please turn; let no injustice be done.  
Turn now; my vindication is at stake.

<sup>30</sup>Is there any injustice on my tongue?  
Cannot my palate discern the cause  
of calamity?”

### New Testament Reading: John 3:22–4:6

John the Baptist Exalts Christ

<sup>22</sup>After this Jesus and his disciples  
went into the Judean countryside, and he  
remained there with them and was baptizing.

<sup>23</sup>John also was baptizing at Aenon near  
Salim, because water was plentiful there, and  
people were coming and being baptized <sup>24</sup>(for  
John had not yet been put in prison).

<sup>25</sup>Now a discussion arose between  
some of John’s disciples and a Jew over  
purification. <sup>26</sup>And they came to John  
and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with  
you across the Jordan, to whom you bore  
witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are  
going to him.” <sup>27</sup>John answered, “A person  
cannot receive even one thing unless it is

given him from heaven. <sup>28</sup>You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ <sup>29</sup>The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. <sup>30</sup>He must increase, but I must decrease.”

<sup>31</sup>He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. <sup>32</sup>He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. <sup>33</sup>Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. <sup>34</sup>For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. <sup>35</sup>The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. <sup>36</sup>Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Jesus and the Woman of Samaria

<sup>4:1</sup>Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John <sup>2</sup>(although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), <sup>3</sup>he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. <sup>4</sup>And he had to pass through Samaria. <sup>5</sup>So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

## Writing

It is the height of senselessness for the sentiments of the modern man when, in

Luther’s Little Baptismal Book [*Taufbüchlein*] and in the old agendas of our Church, the child continues to be asked whether it forsakes the devil, if it will be baptized according to its faith, and if it will affirm the question: “Will you be baptized?” But it is not merely avowed liturgical conservatism or even thoughtlessness when the Church for nearly two thousand years has thus baptized infants as though they were adults, as though they could already confess with the mouth and believe with the heart. This is not the “as though” of mere fiction. It is much rather connected with the eschatological “as though” of the Sacrament of Baptism. God views us in Baptism as people who have already died and been raised, put to death with His beloved Son on Golgotha and raised from the dead on Easter morning. Thus he already views us as such who already believe, the poorest, weakest little child which we bring to Holy Baptism in “the understanding and hope that it will believe” in a way no different from a Basil, an Ambrose, or an Augustine, who as grown men and conscious Christians came to Baptism.

—Hermann Sasse

## Hymnody

He breaks the pow’r of canceled sin;  
He sets the pris’ner free.  
His blood can make the foulest clean;  
His blood avails for me.

—Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing  
(LSB 528:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, Your servant Silas preached the Gospel alongside the apostles Peter and Paul to the peoples

of Asia Minor, Greece, and Macedonia. We give You thanks for raising up in this and every land evangelists and heralds of Your kingdom, that the Church may continue to proclaim the unsearchable riches of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1142)

**Silas, Fellow Worker of St. Peter and St. Paul**

Silas, a leader in the Church at Jerusalem, was chosen by Paul (Acts 15:40) to accompany him on his second missionary journey from Antioch to Asia Minor and Macedonia. Silas, also known as Silvanus, was imprisoned with Paul in Philippi and experienced the riots in Thessalonica and Berea. After rejoining Paul in Corinth, Silas apparently remained there for an extended time. Sometime later he apparently joined the apostle Peter, likely serving as Peter’s secretary (1 Peter 5:12). Tradition says that Silas was the first bishop at Corinth.

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Smalcald Articles III I–II

**11 FEBRUARY**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises | to our God;\*  
for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is | fitting.
- <sup>2</sup>The LORD builds up Je- | rusalem;\*  
he gathers the outcasts of | Israel.
- <sup>3</sup>He heals the broken- | hearted\*

- and binds | up their wounds.
  - <sup>6</sup>The LORD lifts up the | humble;\*  
he casts the wicked | to the ground.
  - <sup>7</sup>Sing to the LORD with thanks- | giving;\*  
make melody to our God | on the lyre!
  - <sup>8</sup>He covers the heavens with clouds; he  
prepares rain | for the earth;\*  
he makes grass grow | on the hills.
  - <sup>9</sup>He gives to the | beasts their food,\*  
and to the young ravens | that cry.
  - <sup>10</sup>His delight is not in the strength | of  
the horse,\*  
nor his pleasure in the legs | of a man,
  - <sup>11</sup>but the LORD takes pleasure  
in those who | fear him,\*  
in those who hope in his | steadfast love.
- Psalm 147:1–3, 6–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 147*

**Old Testament Reading: Job 7:1–21**

Job Continues: My Life Has No Hope

- <sup>1</sup>“Has not man a hard service on earth,  
and are not his days like the days  
of a hired hand?
- <sup>2</sup>Like a slave who longs for the shadow,  
and like a hired hand who looks  
for his wages,
- <sup>3</sup>so I am allotted months of emptiness,  
and nights of misery are apportioned to me.
- <sup>4</sup>When I lie down I say, ‘When shall I arise?’  
But the night is long,  
and I am full of tossing till the dawn.
- <sup>5</sup>My flesh is clothed with worms and dirt;  
my skin hardens, then breaks out afresh.
- <sup>6</sup>My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle  
and come to their end without hope.
- <sup>7</sup>“Remember that my life is a breath;  
my eye will never again see good.

<sup>8</sup>The eye of him who sees me will behold me no more;  
 while your eyes are on me, I shall be gone.

<sup>9</sup>As the cloud fades and vanishes,  
 so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up;

<sup>10</sup>he returns no more to his house,  
 nor does his place know him anymore.

<sup>11</sup>“Therefore I will not restrain my mouth;  
 I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;  
 I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

<sup>12</sup>Am I the sea, or a sea monster,  
 that you set a guard over me?

<sup>13</sup>When I say, ‘My bed will comfort me,  
 my couch will ease my complaint,’

<sup>14</sup>then you scare me with dreams  
 and terrify me with visions,

<sup>15</sup>so that I would choose strangling  
 and death rather than my bones.

<sup>16</sup>I loathe my life; I would not live forever.  
 Leave me alone, for my days are a breath.

<sup>17</sup>What is man, that you make so much of him,  
 and that you set your heart on him,

<sup>18</sup>visit him every morning  
 and test him every moment?

<sup>19</sup>How long will you not look away from me,  
 nor leave me alone till I swallow my spit?

<sup>20</sup>If I sin, what do I do to you, you watcher of mankind?  
 Why have you made me your mark?  
 Why have I become a burden to you?

<sup>21</sup>Why do you not pardon my transgression  
 and take away my iniquity?

For now I shall lie in the earth;  
 you will seek me, but I shall not be.”

## New Testament Reading: John 4:7–26

[Jesus and the Woman of Samaria]

<sup>7</sup>A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.”  
<sup>8</sup>(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)  
<sup>10</sup>Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” <sup>11</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” <sup>13</sup>Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”  
<sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”  
<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” <sup>17</sup>The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; <sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” <sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.  
<sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup>You

worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.<sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.<sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”<sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.”<sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

## Writing

But if we do want to boast, then let us boast that we receive from the fullness of Christ, that we are enlightened by Him, attain forgiveness of sin, and become children of God through Him. For this is the sum and substance of it all: Whoever wishes to be safeguarded from the devil’s might and to escape sin and death must draw from this well, Christ;

from Him flows all salvation and eternal bliss. This fountain is inexhaustible; it is full of grace and truth before God; it never fails no matter how much we draw from it. Even if we all dip from it without stopping, it cannot be emptied, but it remains a perennial fountain of all grace and truth, an unfathomable well, an eternal fountain. The more we draw from it, the more it gives. Such water, as St. John remarks later, wells up to eternal life (John 4:14).

The sun is not dimmed and darkened by shining on so many people or by providing the entire world with its light and bright splendor. It retains its light intact. It loses nothing; it is immeasurable, perhaps able to illumine ten more worlds. I suppose that a hundred thousand candles can be ignited

from one light, and still this light will not lose any of its brilliance. Likewise, a learned man can educate a thousand scholars without forfeiting any of his own learning. The more he shares with others, the more he has himself. Thus Christ, our Lord, to whom we must flee and of whom we must ask all, is an interminable well, the chief source of all grace, truth, righteousness, wisdom, and life, without limit, measure, or end. Even if the whole world were to draw from this fountain enough grace and truth to transform all people into angels, still it would not lose as much as a drop. This fountain constantly overflows with sheer grace. Whoever wishes to enjoy Christ’s grace—and no one is excluded—let him come and receive it from Him. You will never drain this fountain of living water; it will never run dry. You will all draw from it much more than enough, and yet it will remain a perennial well.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Come, Thou Fount of ev’ry blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
While the hope of endless glory  
Fills my heart with joy and love,  
Teach me ever to adore Thee;  
May I still Thy goodness prove.

—Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing  
(LSB 686:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, You have called Your Church to worship Your Son in Spirit and truth. Through the Spirit of Jesus, keep us faithful to the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, so that we may be

partakers of His divine life and inherit the kingdom promised for those who drink from the water of life; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1143)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles III III 1–9

## 12 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup>In you, O LORD, do I take | refuge;\*  
let me never be | put to shame!

<sup>2</sup>In your righteousness deliver me  
and | rescue me;\*  
incline your ear to me, and | save me!

<sup>3</sup>Be to me a rock of refuge,  
to which I may contin- | ually come;\*  
you have given the command to save me,  
for you are my rock and my | fortress.

<sup>4</sup>Rescue me, O my God,  
from the hand of the | wicked,\*  
from the grasp of the unjust  
and | cruel man.

<sup>5</sup>For you, O Lord, | are my hope,\*  
my trust, O LORD, | from my youth.

<sup>6</sup>Upon you I have leaned from before  
my birth; you are he who took me  
from my | mother's womb.\*  
My praise is continually | of you.

<sup>17</sup>O God, from my youth you have | taught  
me,\*  
and I still proclaim your | wondrous  
deeds.

<sup>18</sup>So even to old age and gray hairs, O God,  
do not for- | sake me,\*  
until I proclaim your might to another  
generation, your power to all | those  
to come.

—Psalm 71:1–6, 17–18

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 99*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 8:1–22

Bildad Speaks: Job Should Repent

<sup>1</sup>Then Bildad the Shuhite answered  
and said:

<sup>2</sup>“How long will you say these things,  
and the words of your mouth  
be a great wind?

<sup>3</sup>Does God pervert justice?  
Or does the Almighty pervert  
the right?

<sup>4</sup>If your children have sinned against him,  
he has delivered them into the hand  
of their transgression.

<sup>5</sup>If you will seek God  
and plead with the Almighty  
for mercy,

<sup>6</sup>if you are pure and upright,  
surely then he will rouse himself  
for you  
and restore your rightful habitation.

<sup>7</sup>And though your beginning was small,  
your latter days will be very great.

<sup>8</sup>“For inquire, please, of bygone ages,  
and consider what the fathers have  
searched out.

<sup>9</sup>For we are but of yesterday  
and know nothing,  
for our days on earth are a shadow.

<sup>10</sup>Will they not teach you and tell you  
and utter words out of their  
understanding?

<sup>11</sup>“Can papyrus grow where there  
is no marsh?

Can reeds flourish where there  
is no water?

<sup>12</sup>While yet in flower and not cut down,  
they wither before any other plant.

- <sup>13</sup>Such are the paths of all who forget God;  
the hope of the godless shall perish.
- <sup>14</sup>His confidence is severed,  
and his trust is a spider's web.
- <sup>15</sup>He leans against his house,  
but it does not stand;  
he lays hold of it,  
but it does not endure.
- <sup>16</sup>He is a lush plant before the sun,  
and his shoots spread over his garden.
- <sup>17</sup>His roots entwine the stone heap;  
he looks upon a house of stones.
- <sup>18</sup>If he is destroyed from his place,  
then it will deny him, saying,  
'I have never seen you.'
- <sup>19</sup>Behold, this is the joy of his way,  
and out of the soil others will spring.
- <sup>20</sup>'Behold, God will not reject a blameless man,  
nor take the hand of evildoers.
- <sup>21</sup>He will yet fill your mouth with laughter,  
and your lips with shouting.
- <sup>22</sup>Those who hate you will be clothed with shame,  
and the tent of the wicked will be no more."

### New Testament Reading: John 4:27–45

[Jesus and the Woman of Samaria]

<sup>27</sup>Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" <sup>28</sup>So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup>"Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this

be the Christ?" <sup>30</sup>They went out of the town and were coming to him.

<sup>31</sup>Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." <sup>32</sup>But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." <sup>33</sup>So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" <sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. <sup>35</sup>Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. <sup>36</sup>Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

<sup>39</sup>Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup>And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup>They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

<sup>43</sup>After the two days he departed for Galilee. <sup>44</sup>(For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) <sup>45</sup>So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast.

## Writing

The woman had listened to Jesus with increasing understanding, not unmixed, however, with some measure of bewilderment over the depth of wisdom which lay in the words of Jesus. But the drift of the Lord's speech seemed to be that the time of Messianic glory was about to be revealed. Now the Samaritans had some dim and uncertain idea of the promised Messiah out of the Pentateuch. And the woman now voices her hope in this Messiah, who is called the Christ; with His coming, she knows, all type, symbol, and prophecy would be at an end, for He would bring them a full and complete message, clear and unmistakable to their understanding, without type and external worship. Jesus now revealed Himself to the woman in a few simple words: I am He, the man that is speaking with you. Jesus is the one Savior that can and will give to all men the full Gospel of salvation. He is the Savior of the world. There was no danger in this announcement of the Lord in Samaria, for, unlike the Jews, the Samaritans did not regard the promised Messiah as a king who was to inaugurate political changes, but as a prophet and teacher who would give them the full revelation of God's Word and will. But the plain words of Jesus had taught the woman the true meaning of the Messiah, and she, the sinner, believed Him to be the Savior of sinners.

—Paul E. Kretzmann

## Hymnody

Open now the crystal fountain  
Whence the healing stream doth flow;  
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar  
Lead me all my journey through.

Strong deliv'rer, strong deliv'rer,  
Be Thou still my strength and shield;  
Be Thou still my strength and shield.

—Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer  
(LSB 918:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the world, help us ever to seek You and to seek others for You, that Your harvest may be full and we may join those from every tribe and nation at the heavenly feast, where You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1144)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles III III 10–19

## 13 FEBRUARY

*Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos*

## Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Oh come, let us sing | to the LORD;\*  
let us make a joyful noise to the rock  
of our sal- | vation!
- <sup>2</sup> Let us come into his presence  
with thanks- | giving;\*  
let us make a joyful noise to him  
with | songs of praise!
- <sup>3</sup> For the LORD is a | great God,\*  
and a great King a- | bove all gods.
- <sup>4</sup> In his hand are the depths | of the earth;\*  
the heights of the mountains  
are his | also.
- <sup>5</sup> The sea is his, for he | made it,\*  
and his hands formed the | dry land.

<sup>6</sup>Oh come, let us worship and | bow down;\*  
let us kneel before the LORD,  
our | Maker!

<sup>7</sup>For he | is our God,\*  
and we are the people of his pasture,  
and the sheep | of his hand.  
—Psalm 95:1–7a

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 70*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 9:1–35

Job Replies: There Is No Arbitrator

<sup>1</sup>Then Job answered and said:

<sup>2</sup>“Truly I know that it is so:  
But how can a man be in the right  
before God?

<sup>3</sup>If one wished to contend with him,  
one could not answer him once  
in a thousand times.

<sup>4</sup>He is wise in heart and mighty  
in strength  
—who has hardened himself against  
him, and succeeded?—

<sup>5</sup>he who removes mountains,  
and they know it not,  
when he overturns them in his anger,

<sup>6</sup>who shakes the earth out of its place,  
and its pillars tremble;

<sup>7</sup>who commands the sun,  
and it does not rise;  
who seals up the stars;

<sup>8</sup>who alone stretched out the heavens  
and trampled the waves of the sea;

<sup>9</sup>who made the Bear and Orion,  
the Pleiades and the chambers  
of the south;

<sup>10</sup>who does great things beyond  
searching out,  
and marvelous things beyond number.

<sup>11</sup>Behold, he passes by me,  
and I see him not;  
he moves on, but I do not perceive him.

<sup>12</sup>Behold, he snatches away;  
who can turn him back?  
Who will say to him,  
‘What are you doing?’

<sup>13</sup>“God will not turn back his anger;  
beneath him bowed the helpers  
of Rahab.

<sup>14</sup>How then can I answer him,  
choosing my words with him?

<sup>15</sup>Though I am in the right,  
I cannot answer him;  
I must appeal for mercy  
to my accuser.

<sup>16</sup>If I summoned him and he answered me,  
I would not believe that he was  
listening to my voice.

<sup>17</sup>For he crushes me with a tempest  
and multiplies my wounds  
without cause;

<sup>18</sup>he will not let me get my breath,  
but fills me with bitterness.

<sup>19</sup>If it is a contest of strength,  
behold, he is mighty!  
If it is a matter of justice,  
who can summon him?

<sup>20</sup>Though I am in the right, my own  
mouth would condemn me;  
though I am blameless, he would  
prove me perverse.

<sup>21</sup>I am blameless; I regard not myself;  
I loathe my life.

<sup>22</sup>It is all one; therefore I say,  
He destroys both the blameless and  
the wicked.

<sup>23</sup>When disaster brings sudden death,  
he mocks at the calamity  
of the innocent.

- <sup>24</sup>The earth is given into the hand  
of the wicked;  
    he covers the faces of its judges—  
    if it is not he, who then is it?
- <sup>25</sup>“My days are swifter than a runner;  
    they flee away; they see no good.
- <sup>26</sup>They go by like skiffs of reed,  
    like an eagle swooping on the prey.
- <sup>27</sup>If I say, ‘I will forget my complaint,  
    I will put off my sad face,  
    and be of good cheer,’
- <sup>28</sup>I become afraid of all my suffering,  
    for I know you will not hold  
    me innocent.
- <sup>29</sup>I shall be condemned;  
    why then do I labor in vain?
- <sup>30</sup>If I wash myself with snow  
    and cleanse my hands with lye,  
<sup>31</sup>yet you will plunge me into a pit,  
    and my own clothes will abhor me.
- <sup>32</sup>For he is not a man, as I am,  
that I might answer him,  
    that we should come to trial together.
- <sup>33</sup>There is no arbiter between us,  
    who might lay his hand on us both.
- <sup>34</sup>Let him take his rod away from me,  
    and let not dread of him terrify me.
- <sup>35</sup>Then I would speak without fear of him,  
    for I am not so in myself.”

### New Testament Reading: John 4:46–54

#### Jesus Heals an Official's Son

<sup>46</sup>So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. <sup>47</sup>When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. <sup>48</sup>So Jesus said to him, “Unless you see signs and

wonders you will not believe.” <sup>49</sup>The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” <sup>50</sup>Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. <sup>51</sup>As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. <sup>52</sup>So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” <sup>53</sup>The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” And he himself believed, and all his household. <sup>54</sup>This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

### Writing

“In the Epistle to the Ephesians [St. Paul] gives a charge on this subject of work, saying: “He that stole, let him now steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have something to give to him who suffers need.” And in the Acts of the Apostles, too, we find that he not only taught this but also actually practiced it himself. For when he had come to Corinth, he did not permit himself to lodge anywhere except with Aquila and Priscilla, because they were of the same trade that he himself was accustomed to practice. For we read: “After this, Paul departing from Athens came to Corinth; and finding a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, and Priscilla his wife, he came to them because they were of the same trade; and abode with them, and worked: for they were tent-makers by trade.”

Then going to Miletus, and from thence sending to Ephesus and summoning to him the elders of the church of Ephesus, he

charged them how they ought to rule the church of God in his absence, and said: “I have not coveted any man’s silver and gold; you yourselves know how for such things as were needful for me and them that are with me these hands have ministered. I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said: It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

—John Cassian

### Hymnody

Now hell, its prince, the devil,  
Of all their pow’r are shorn;  
Now I am safe from evil,  
And sin I laugh to scorn.  
Grim death with all its might  
Cannot my soul affright;  
It is a pow’rless form,  
Howe’er it rave and storm.

—Awake, My Heart, with Gladness  
(LSB 467:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Triune God, whose very name is holy, teach us to be faithful hearers and learners of Your Word, fervent in the Spirit as Apollos was, that we may teach it correctly against those who have been led astray into falsehood and error and that we might follow the example of Aquila and Priscilla for the good of the Church You established here and entrusted into our humble care; through Your Holy Spirit, who leads and guides us, and through Your Son, who saves us. (1145)

### Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos

Aquila and his wife, Priscilla (Prisca), Jewish contemporaries of St. Paul, traveled widely. Because of persecution in Rome, they went to Corinth where they met the apostle Paul, who joined them in their trade of tentmaking (Acts 18:1–3). In turn, they joined Paul in his mission of proclaiming the Christian Gospel. The couple later traveled with Paul from Corinth to Ephesus (Acts 18:18), where the two of them established a home that served as hospitality headquarters for new converts to Christianity. Apollos was one of their numerous Jewish pupils in the faith. An eloquent man, Apollos, “being fervent in spirit . . . spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus” (Acts 18:25). He later traveled from Corinth to the province of Achaia, “showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus” (Acts 18:28). Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos are all remembered and honored for their great missionary zeal.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles III III 20–28

## 14 FEBRUARY

*Valentine, Martyr*

### Psalmody

- <sup>153</sup> Look on my affliction and de- | liver me,\*  
for I do not for- | get your law.
- <sup>154</sup> Plead my cause and re- | deem me;\*  
give me life according to your | promise!
- <sup>155</sup> Salvation is far from the | wicked,\*  
for they do not seek your | statutes.

- <sup>156</sup> Great is your mercy, | O LORD;\*  
give me life according to your | just decrees.
- <sup>157</sup> Many are my persecutors  
and my adver- | saries,\*  
but I do not swerve from  
your testi- | monies.
- <sup>158</sup> I look at the faithless | with disgust,\*  
because they do not keep | your  
commands.
- <sup>159</sup> Consider how I love your | precepts!\*  
Give me life according to your | steadfast  
love.
- <sup>160</sup> The sum of your | word is truth,\*  
and every one of your just and righteous  
decrees endures for- | ever.  
—Psalm 119:153–160

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 35*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 10:1–22

Job Continues: A Plea to God

- <sup>1</sup>“I loathe my life;  
I will give free utterance to my complaint;  
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.  
<sup>2</sup>I will say to God, Do not condemn me;  
let me know why you contend against me.  
<sup>3</sup>Does it seem good to you to oppress,  
to despise the work of your hands  
and favor the designs of the wicked?  
<sup>4</sup>Have you eyes of flesh?  
Do you see as man sees?  
<sup>5</sup>Are your days as the days of man,  
or your years as a man’s years,  
<sup>6</sup>that you seek out my iniquity  
and search for my sin,  
<sup>7</sup>although you know that I am not guilty,  
and there is none to deliver out  
of your hand?  
<sup>8</sup>Your hands fashioned and made me,  
and now you have destroyed me  
altogether.

- <sup>9</sup>Remember that you have made me like clay;  
and will you return me to the dust?  
<sup>10</sup>Did you not pour me out like milk  
and curdle me like cheese?  
<sup>11</sup>You clothed me with skin and flesh,  
and knit me together with bones  
and sinews.  
<sup>12</sup>You have granted me life and steadfast love,  
and your care has preserved my spirit.  
<sup>13</sup>Yet these things you hid in your heart;  
I know that this was your purpose.  
<sup>14</sup>If I sin, you watch me  
and do not acquit me of my iniquity.  
<sup>15</sup>If I am guilty, woe to me!  
If I am in the right,  
I cannot lift up my head,  
for I am filled with disgrace  
and look on my affliction.  
<sup>16</sup>And were my head lifted up, you would  
hunt me like a lion  
and again work wonders against me.  
<sup>17</sup>You renew your witnesses against me  
and increase your vexation toward me;  
you bring fresh troops against me.  
<sup>18</sup>“Why did you bring me out from the womb?  
Would that I had died before any eye had  
seen me  
<sup>19</sup>and were as though I had not been,  
carried from the womb to the grave.  
<sup>20</sup>Are not my days few?  
Then cease, and leave me alone,  
that I may find a little cheer  
<sup>21</sup>before I go—and I shall not return—  
to the land of darkness and deep shadow,  
<sup>22</sup>the land of gloom like thick darkness,  
like deep shadow without any order,  
where light is as thick darkness.”

## New Testament Reading: John 5:1–18

The Healing at the Pool on the Sabbath

<sup>1</sup>After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. <sup>3</sup>In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. <sup>5</sup>One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup>When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” <sup>7</sup>The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” <sup>8</sup>Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” <sup>9</sup>And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. <sup>10</sup>So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.” <sup>11</sup>But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’” <sup>12</sup>They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk?’” <sup>13</sup>Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. <sup>14</sup>Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” <sup>15</sup>The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. <sup>16</sup>And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup>But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

Jesus Is Equal with God

<sup>18</sup>This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

## Writing

[A multitude of invalids lay on the porches under the five-roofed colonnade,] and yet only one was healed, while He could by a word have raised them all up. . . . The real health of bodies, which is looked for from the Lord, will be at the end, in the resurrection of the dead. What shall live then shall never again die; what shall be healed shall never again be sick; what shall be satisfied shall never again hunger and thirst; what shall be made new shall never again grow old. But at this time, however, the eyes of the blind, that were opened by those acts of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, were again closed in death; and limbs of the paralytics that received strength were again loosened in death; and whatever was for a time made whole in mortal limbs came to nought in the end. But the soul that believed passed to eternal life. . . .

That water, then—namely, that people—was shut in by the five books of Moses, as by five porches. Those books [of the Law] brought forth the sick, but could not heal them. The Law convicted, but could not acquit the sinner. Accordingly the letter [of the Law], without grace, made men guilty, whom on confessing grace delivered. For this is what the apostle said: “For if a law had been given which could have given life, surely righteousness should have been by the law.” Why, then, was the Law given? He goes on to say, “But the Scripture has concluded all

under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” . . . The five porches are the Law. Why did not the five porches heal the sick? Because, “if there had been a law given which could have given life, surely righteousness should have been by the law.” Why, then, did the porches contain those whom they did not heal? Because “the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”  
—Augustine

### Hymnody

Praise to the Lord, who has fearfully,  
wondrously, made you,  
Health has bestowed and, when heedlessly  
falling, has stayed you.  
What need or grief  
Ever has failed of relief?  
Wings of His mercy did shade you.  
—Praise to the Lord, the Almighty  
(LSB 790:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, You kindled the flame of Your love in the heart of Your holy martyr Valentine. Grant to us, Your humble servants, a like faith and the power of love, that we who rejoice in Christ’s triumph may embody His love in our lives; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1146)

### Valentine, Martyr

A physician and priest living in Rome during the rule of Emperor Claudius, Valentine became one of the noted martyrs of the third century. The commemoration

of his death, which occurred in AD 270, became part of the calendar of remembrance in the Early Church of the West. Tradition suggests that on the day of his execution for his Christian faith, Valentine left a note of encouragement for a child of his jailer written on an irregularly shaped piece of paper. This greeting became a pattern for millions of written expressions of love and caring that now are the highlight of Valentine’s Day in many nations.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles III III 29–45

## 15 FEBRUARY

*Philemon and Onesimus*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes | refuge;\*  
in the shadow of your wings  
I will take refuge, till the storms  
of destruction | pass by.
- <sup>2</sup> I cry out to | God Most High,\*  
to God who fulfills his pur- | pose for me.
- <sup>3</sup> He will send from heaven and save me;  
he will put to shame him  
who tramples | on me.\*  
God will send out his steadfast love  
and his | faithfulness!
- <sup>4</sup> My soul is in the midst of lions;  
I lie down amid | fiery beasts—\*  
the children of man, whose teeth  
are spears and arrows, whose tongues  
are | sharp swords.
- <sup>5</sup> Be exalted, O God, above the | heavens!\*  
Let your glory be over | all the earth!

<sup>8</sup>Awake, my glory! Awake, O | harp and lyre!\*  
I will a- | wake the dawn!

<sup>9</sup>I will give thanks to you,  
O Lord, among the | peoples;\*  
I will sing praises to you among  
the | nations.

<sup>10</sup>For your steadfast love is great  
to the | heavens,\*  
your faithfulness | to the clouds.  
—Psalm 57:1–5, 8–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 1*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 11:1–20

Zophar Speaks: You Deserve Worse

<sup>1</sup>Then Zophar the Naamathite answered  
and said:

<sup>2</sup>“Should a multitude of words go  
unanswered,  
and a man full of talk  
be judged right?

<sup>3</sup>Should your babble silence men,  
and when you mock,  
shall no one shame you?

<sup>4</sup>For you say, ‘My doctrine is pure,  
and I am clean in God’s eyes.’

<sup>5</sup>But oh, that God would speak  
and open his lips to you,

<sup>6</sup>and that he would tell you  
the secrets of wisdom!

For he is manifold in understanding.  
Know then that God exacts of you less  
than your guilt deserves.

<sup>7</sup>“Can you find out the deep things  
of God?

Can you find out the limit  
of the Almighty?

<sup>8</sup>It is higher than heaven—  
what can you do?

Deeper than Sheol—  
what can you know?

<sup>9</sup>Its measure is longer than the earth  
and broader than the sea.

<sup>10</sup>If he passes through and imprisons  
and summons the court,  
who can turn him back?

<sup>11</sup>For he knows worthless men;  
when he sees iniquity,  
will he not consider it?

<sup>12</sup>But a stupid man will get understanding  
when a wild donkey’s colt  
is born a man!

<sup>13</sup>“If you prepare your heart,  
you will stretch out your hands  
toward him.

<sup>14</sup>If iniquity is in your hand,  
put it far away,  
and let not injustice dwell  
in your tents.

<sup>15</sup>Surely then you will lift up your face  
without blemish;  
you will be secure and will not fear.

<sup>16</sup>You will forget your misery;  
you will remember it as waters  
that have passed away.

<sup>17</sup>And your life will be brighter  
than the noonday;  
its darkness will be like the morning.

<sup>18</sup>And you will feel secure,  
because there is hope;  
you will look around  
and take your rest in security.

<sup>19</sup>You will lie down,  
and none will make you afraid;  
many will court your favor.

<sup>20</sup>But the eyes of the wicked will fail;  
all way of escape will be lost to them,  
and their hope is to breathe their last.”

**New Testament Reading: John 5:19–29**

## The Authority of the Son

<sup>19</sup>So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. <sup>20</sup>For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. <sup>21</sup>For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. <sup>22</sup>The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup>that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

<sup>25</sup>“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup>For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. <sup>27</sup>And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup>Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice <sup>29</sup>and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”

**Writing**

My son: First, study the divine Scriptures. Study them I say. For we need to study the divine writings deeply in order to prevent ourselves from speaking faster than

we think. And while you study these divine works, with a believing and God-pleasing intention, knock at that which is closed in them, and it shall be opened to you by the doorkeeper, of whom Jesus says, “To him the doorkeeper opens.” While you attend to this divine reading, seek aright and with unwavering faith in God the hidden sense which is present in most passages of the divine Scriptures. And do not be content with knocking and seeking, with mere knowledge. What is most necessary for understanding divine things is prayer. In urging us to this the Savior says not only, “Knock, and it shall be opened to you” and “Seek, and you shall find,” but also, “Ask, and it shall be given you.” So much I have ventured on account of my fatherly love to you. Whether I have ventured well in this or not, God knows, and His Christ. May you now partake in these things and have an ever increasing share of them, so that you may be able to say not only, “We are partakers of Christ,” but also, “We are partakers of God.”

—Origen

**Hymnody**

All trials and all griefs are past,  
A blessed end has come at last.  
Christ’s yoke was borne with ready will;  
Who dieth thus is living still.

—This Body in the Grave We Lay  
(LSB 759:4)

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord God, heavenly Father, You sent Onesimus back to Philemon as a brother in Christ, freeing him from his slavery to sin through the preaching of the apostle Paul. Cleanse the depths of sin within our souls

and bid resentment cease for past offenses, that, by Your mercy, we may be reconciled to our brothers and sisters and our lives will reflect Your peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1147)

### Philemon and Onesimus

Philemon was a prominent first-century Christian who owned a slave named Onesimus. Although the name *Onesimus* means “useful,” Onesimus proved himself “useless” when he ran away from his master and perhaps even stole from him (Philemon 18). Somehow Onesimus came into contact with the apostle Paul while the latter was in prison (possibly in Rome), and through Paul’s proclamation of the Gospel, he became a Christian. After confessing to the apostle that he was a runaway slave, Onesimus was directed by Paul to return to his master and become “useful” again. In order to help pave the way for Onesimus’s peaceful return home, Paul sent him on his way with a letter addressed to Philemon, a letter in which he urged Philemon to forgive his slave for running away and to “receive him as you would receive me” (v. 17), “no longer as a slave but . . . as a beloved brother” (v. 16). The letter was eventually included by the Church as one of the books of the New Testament.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles III IV–VII

## 16 FEBRUARY

*Philipp Melancthon (birth), Confessor*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> He who dwells in the shelter  
of the | Most High\*  
will abide in the shadow  
of the Al- | mighty.
- <sup>2</sup> I will say to the LORD,  
“My refuge and my | fortress,\*  
my God, in | whom I trust.”
- <sup>3</sup> For he will deliver you from the snare  
of the | fowler\*  
and from the deadly | pestilence.
- <sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his pinions, and  
under his wings you will find | refuge;\*  
his faithfulness is a shield and | buckler.
- <sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror | of the night,\*  
nor the arrow that | flies by day,  
<sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in | darkness,\*  
nor the destruction that wastes  
at | noonday.
- <sup>14</sup> “Because he holds fast to me in love,  
I will de- | liver him;\*  
I will protect him,  
because he | knows my name.
- <sup>15</sup> When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
I will be with him in | trouble;\*  
I will rescue him and | honor him.
- <sup>16</sup> With long life I will sat- | isfy him\*  
and show him my sal- | vation.”  
—Psalm 91:1–6, 14–16

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:1–8*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 12:1–6, 12–25

Job Replies: The LORD Has Done This

<sup>1</sup>Then Job answered and said:

<sup>2</sup>“No doubt you are the people,  
and wisdom will die with you.

<sup>3</sup>But I have understanding as well as you;  
 I am not inferior to you.  
 Who does not know such things  
 as these?

<sup>4</sup>I am a laughingstock to my friends;  
 I, who called to God  
 and he answered me,  
 a just and blameless man,  
 am a laughingstock.

<sup>5</sup>In the thought of one who is at ease there  
 is contempt for misfortune;  
 it is ready for those whose feet slip.

<sup>6</sup>The tents of robbers are at peace,  
 and those who provoke God  
 are secure,  
 who bring their god in their hand. . . .

<sup>12</sup>Wisdom is with the aged,  
 and understanding in length of days.

<sup>13</sup><sup>6</sup>With God are wisdom and might;  
 he has counsel and understanding.

<sup>14</sup>If he tears down, none can rebuild;  
 if he shuts a man in, none can open.

<sup>15</sup>If he withholds the waters, they dry up;  
 if he sends them out,  
 they overwhelm the land.

<sup>16</sup>With him are strength  
 and sound wisdom;  
 the deceived and the deceiver are his.

<sup>17</sup>He leads counselors away stripped,  
 and judges he makes fools.

<sup>18</sup>He looses the bonds of kings  
 and binds a waistcloth on their hips.

<sup>19</sup>He leads priests away stripped  
 and overthrows the mighty.

<sup>20</sup>He deprives of speech those  
 who are trusted  
 and takes away the discernment  
 of the elders.

<sup>21</sup>He pours contempt on princes  
 and loosens the belt of the strong.

<sup>22</sup>He uncovers the deeps out of darkness  
 and brings deep darkness to light.

<sup>23</sup>He makes nations great,  
 and he destroys them;  
 he enlarges nations,  
 and leads them away.

<sup>24</sup>He takes away understanding  
 from the chiefs of the people of the earth  
 and makes them wander  
 in a pathless waste.

<sup>25</sup>They grope in the dark without light,  
 and he makes them stagger  
 like a drunken man.”

### New Testament Reading: John 5:30–47

Witnesses to Jesus

<sup>30</sup>“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>31</sup>If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not deemed true. <sup>32</sup>There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true. <sup>33</sup>You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. <sup>34</sup>Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup>He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. <sup>36</sup>But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. <sup>37</sup>And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, <sup>38</sup>and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. <sup>39</sup>You search the Scriptures because you

think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, <sup>40</sup>yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. <sup>41</sup>I do not receive glory from people. <sup>42</sup>But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. <sup>43</sup>I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. <sup>44</sup>How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? <sup>45</sup>Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. <sup>46</sup>For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. <sup>47</sup>But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

## Writing

The words in Genesis [3:15]: "The Seed will crush the head of the serpent," signify nothing other than the same thing which John says: "For this the Son of God was revealed, that he might destroy the works of the devil" [1 John 3:8]. Adam understood the promise in this way, and thereafter all the patriarchs believed that on account of this promised seed their sins were forgiven them, and that they would be set free from sin and from eternal death. Through this faith they were righteous, not through fulfillment of the Law. By this faith they were raised up in all dangers and terrors. Indeed they knew that this Lord was present with them, as Jacob plainly says, in Gen. 48[:16]: "The Angel who set me free from all evil bless these boys"; for he proclaims him Lord who had set him free from all evils, and asks of him that he would bless his descendants. These things can be understood in no other way except as pertaining to the Son of God. Paul also says

that the Son of God accompanied the camp of the people of Israel [1 Cor. 10:4]. John [1:5] also says that all things were made through this Son, and that the Light shines on the darkness. All triumphs against our adversary, the devil, are imparted through this Son. Noah was preserved, Abraham defended, Joseph brought out of prison, the people freed from Egypt, and Daniel also spoke with him. Thus the Gospel of the apostles preaches Christ, and testifies that He is the sacrificial victim, liberator, and Savior, and commands us to trust this leader and liberator, as also many statements of the prophets teach, as Ps. 2[:12] says: "Kiss the Son . . . blessed are all who trust in him." And without this faith, i.e., trust in the mercy promised because of the Son, there is no true invocation of God, no true worship. For through this Priest we have access to the Father, as we often find written.

—Philipp Melanchthon

## Hymnody

The Church from You, dear Master,  
 Received the gift divine;  
 And still that light is lifted  
 O'er all the earth to shine.  
 It is the chart and compass  
 That, all life's voyage through,  
 Mid mists and rocks and quicksands  
 Still guides, O Christ, to You.

—O Word of God Incarnate  
 (LSB 523:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, we praise You for the service of Philipp Melanchthon to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church in the renewal of its life in fidelity to Your Word and promise. Raise up in these gray and

latter days faithful teachers and pastors, inspired by Your Spirit, whose voices will give strength to Your Church and proclaim the ongoing reality of Your kingdom; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1148)

### Philipp Melanchthon, Confessor (birth date)

Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) was a brilliant student of the classics and a humanist scholar. In 1518, he was appointed to teach along with Martin Luther at the University of Wittenberg. At Luther's urging, Melanchthon began teaching theology and Scripture in addition to his courses in classical studies. In April 1530, Emperor Charles V called an official meeting between the representatives of Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism, hoping to effect a meeting of minds between two opposing groups. Since Luther was at that time under papal excommunication and an imperial ban, Melanchthon was assigned the duty of being the chief Lutheran representative at this meeting. He is especially remembered and honored as the author of the Augsburg Confession, which was officially presented by the German princes to the emperor on June 25, 1530, as the defining document of Lutheranism within Christendom. Melanchthon died on April 19, 1560.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles III VIII

## 17 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>25</sup> I have been young, and | now am old,\*  
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken  
or his children beg- | ging for bread.
- <sup>26</sup> He is ever lending | generously,\*  
and his children become a | blessing.
- <sup>27</sup> Turn away from evil | and do good;\*  
so shall you dwell for- | ever.
- <sup>28</sup> For the LORD loves justice;  
he will not forsake his saints.  
They are preserved for- | ever,\*  
but the children of the wicked  
shall | be cut off.
- <sup>29</sup> The righteous shall inher- | it the land\*  
and dwell upon it for- | ever.  
—Psalm 37:25–29

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 77*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 13:1–12

Job Continues: Still I Will Hope in God

- <sup>1</sup>“Behold, my eye has seen all this,  
my ear has heard and understood it.
- <sup>2</sup>What you know, I also know;  
I am not inferior to you.
- <sup>3</sup>But I would speak to the Almighty,  
and I desire to argue my case with God.
- <sup>4</sup>As for you, you whitewash with lies;  
worthless physicians are you all.
- <sup>5</sup>Oh that you would keep silent,  
and it would be your wisdom!
- <sup>6</sup>Hear now my argument  
and listen to the pleadings of my lips.
- <sup>7</sup>Will you speak falsely for God  
and speak deceitfully for him?
- <sup>8</sup>Will you show partiality toward him?  
Will you plead the case for God?

<sup>9</sup>Will it be well with you when he searches you out?

Or can you deceive him,  
as one deceives a man?

<sup>10</sup>He will surely rebuke you  
if in secret you show partiality.

<sup>11</sup>Will not his majesty terrify you,  
and the dread of him fall upon you?

<sup>12</sup>Your maxims are proverbs of ashes;  
your defenses are defenses of clay.”

### **New Testament Reading: John 6:1–21**

#### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

<sup>1</sup>After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup>And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. <sup>3</sup>Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup>Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. <sup>5</sup>Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” <sup>6</sup>He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” <sup>8</sup>One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup>“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” <sup>10</sup>Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. <sup>11</sup>Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup>And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.”

<sup>13</sup>So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. <sup>14</sup>When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”

<sup>15</sup>Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

#### Jesus Walks on Water

<sup>16</sup>When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup>got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. <sup>18</sup>The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup>When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. <sup>20</sup>But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” <sup>21</sup>Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

### **Writing**

#### VII: The Church

Our churches teach that one holy Church is to remain forever. The Church is the congregation of saints [Psalm 149:1] in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered. For the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree about the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies instituted by men, should be the same everywhere. As Paul says, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all” (Ephesians 4:5–6).

## VIII: What the Church Is

Strictly speaking, the Church is the congregation of saints and true believers. However, because many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled within them in this life [Matthew 13:24–30], it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat” (Matthew 23:2). Both the Sacraments and Word are effective because of Christ’s institution and command, even if they are administered by evil men.

Our churches condemn the Donatists, and others like them, who deny that it is lawful to use the ministry of evil men in the Church, and who think that the ministry of evil men is not useful and is ineffective.

## IX: Baptism

Concerning Baptism, our churches teach that Baptism is necessary for salvation [Mark 16:16] and that God’s grace is offered through Baptism [Titus 3:4–7]. They teach that children are to be baptized [Acts 2:38–39]. Being offered to God through Baptism, they are received into God’s grace.

Our churches condemn the Anabaptists, who reject the Baptism of children, and say that children are saved without Baptism.

## X: The Lord’s Supper

Our churches teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and distributed to those who eat the Lord’s Supper [1 Corinthians 10:16]. They reject those who teach otherwise.

## XI: Confession

Our churches teach that private Absolution should be retained in the churches, although listing all sins is not necessary for Confession. For, according to the Psalm, it

is impossible. “Who can discern his errors?” (Psalm 19:12).

—Augsburg Confession VII–XI

**Hymnody**

To pastures green, Lord, safely guide,  
To restful waters lead me;  
Your table well for me provide,  
Your wounded hand now feed me.  
Though weary, sinful, sick, and weak,  
Refuge in You alone I seek,  
To share Your cup of healing.

—Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread  
(*LSB* 625:2)

**Prayer of the Day**

Merciful Father, You gave Your Son Jesus as the heavenly bread of life. Grant us faith to feast on Him in Your Word and Sacraments that we may be nourished unto life everlasting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B71)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Smalcald Articles III IX–XIII

**18 FEBRUARY**

*Martin Luther, Doctor and Confessor*

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD;  
call up- | on his name;\*  
make known his deeds among  
the | peoples!

- <sup>23</sup> Then Israel came to | Egypt;\*  
    Jacob sojourned in the | land of Ham.
- <sup>37</sup> Then he brought out Israel  
    with sil- | ver and gold,\*  
    and there was none among his tribes  
    who | stumbled.
- <sup>38</sup> Egypt was glad when they de- | parted,\*  
    for dread of them had fallen up- | on it.
- <sup>39</sup> He spread a cloud for a | covering,\*  
    and fire to give | light by night.
- <sup>40</sup> They asked, and he | brought quail,\*  
    and gave them bread from heaven  
    in a- | bundance.
- <sup>41</sup> He opened the rock, and water | gushed out;\*  
    it flowed through the desert like a | river.
- <sup>42</sup> For he remembered his holy | promise,\*  
    and Abraham, his | servant.
- <sup>43</sup> So he brought his people | out with joy,\*  
    his chosen ones with | singing.  
    —Psalm 105:1, 23, 37–43

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 105*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 13:13–28

[Job Continues: Still I Will Hope in God]

- <sup>13</sup> “Let me have silence, and I will speak,  
    and let come on me what may.
- <sup>14</sup> Why should I take my flesh in my teeth  
    and put my life in my hand?
- <sup>15</sup> Though he slay me, I will hope in him;  
    yet I will argue my ways to his face.
- <sup>16</sup> This will be my salvation,  
    that the godless shall not come  
    before him.
- <sup>17</sup> Keep listening to my words,  
    and let my declaration be in your ears.
- <sup>18</sup> Behold, I have prepared my case;  
    I know that I shall be in the right.
- <sup>19</sup> Who is there who will contend with me?  
    For then I would be silent and die.

- <sup>20</sup> Only grant me two things,  
    then I will not hide myself from your face:
- <sup>21</sup> withdraw your hand far from me,  
    and let not dread of you terrify me.
- <sup>22</sup> Then call, and I will answer;  
    or let me speak, and you reply to me.
- <sup>23</sup> How many are my iniquities and my sins?  
    Make me know my transgression  
    and my sin.
- <sup>24</sup> Why do you hide your face  
    and count me as your enemy?
- <sup>25</sup> Will you frighten a driven leaf  
    and pursue dry chaff?
- <sup>26</sup> For you write bitter things against me  
    and make me inherit the iniquities  
    of my youth.
- <sup>27</sup> You put my feet in the stocks  
    and watch all my paths;  
    you set a limit for the soles of my feet.
- <sup>28</sup> Man wastes away like a rotten thing,  
    like a garment that is moth-eaten.”

### New Testament Reading: John 6:22–40

I Am the Bread of Life

- <sup>22</sup> On the next day the crowd that  
remained on the other side of the sea saw  
that there had been only one boat there, and  
that Jesus had not entered the boat with his  
disciples, but that his disciples had gone away  
alone. <sup>23</sup> Other boats from Tiberias came near  
the place where they had eaten the bread  
after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>24</sup> So when  
the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor  
his disciples, they themselves got into the  
boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.
- <sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other  
side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi,  
when did you come here?” <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered  
them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are  
seeking me, not because you saw signs, but

because you ate your fill of the loaves. <sup>27</sup>Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” <sup>28</sup>Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” <sup>30</sup>So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?” <sup>31</sup>Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” <sup>32</sup>Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” <sup>34</sup>They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

<sup>35</sup>Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup>But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup>All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup>For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup>And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup>For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

## Writing

Here you can see what it means to believe. It may indeed seem an easy matter, but it is in fact a high and great art. Therefore

when you feel your sin, when your bad conscience smites you, or when persecution comes, then ask yourself whether you really believe. At such times one is wont to run to saints and helpers in cloisters and in the desert for succor and relief, crying: “O my dear man, intercede for me! O dear saint, help me! O let me live! I promise to become pious and to do many good works.” That is how a terrified conscience speaks. But tell me, where is faith? If you believe in the words of Christ, “None of them is lost whom Thou hast given Me” (John 17:12), then, as a Christian, you must say: “I acknowledge no saint here. I am a poor sinner deserving of death; but in defiance of sin and death I cling to Thee, and I will not let Thee go. I have taken hold of Thee, dear Lord Christ. Thou art my Life, and this is the Father’s will, that all who adhere to Thee have eternal life and be raised from the dead. In the meantime let my fate be what it will. I may be beheaded or burned at the stake.” No other life—whether it be called the monastic life or the life of St. Augustine or of St. John the Baptist—will arm a person for victory. Only faith in Christ can do so.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

Thy holy body into death was given,  
 Life to win for us in heaven.  
 No greater love than this to Thee could bind us;  
 May this feast thereof remind us!  
 O Lord, have mercy!  
 Lord, Thy kindness did so constrain Thee  
 That Thy blood should bless and sustain me.  
 All our debt Thou hast paid;  
 Peace with God once more is made:  
 O Lord, have mercy!

—O Lord, We Praise Thee (*LSB* 617:2)

## Prayer of the Day

O God, our refuge and our strength, You raised up Your servant Martin Luther to reform and renew Your Church in the light of Your living Word, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Defend and purify the Church in our own day, and grant that we may boldly proclaim Christ's faithfulness unto death and His vindicating resurrection, which You made known to Your servant Martin through Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1148)

## Martin Luther, Doctor and Reformer

Martin Luther, born on November 10, 1483, in Eisleben, Germany, initially began studies leading toward a degree in law. However, after a close encounter with death, he switched to the study of theology, entered an Augustinian monastery, was ordained a priest in 1505, and received a doctorate in theology in 1512. As a professor at the newly established University of Wittenberg, Luther's scriptural studies led him to question many of the Church's teachings and practices, especially the selling of indulgences. His refusal to back down from his convictions resulted in his excommunication in 1521. Following a period of seclusion at the Wartburg castle, Luther returned to Wittenberg, where he spent the rest of his life preaching and teaching, translating the Scriptures, and writing hymns and numerous theological treatises. He is remembered and honored for his lifelong emphasis on the biblical truth that for Christ's sake God declares us righteous by grace through faith alone. Luther died on February 18, 1546, while visiting the town of his birth.

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Smalcald Articles III XIV–XV

## 19 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>The fool says in his heart, "There | is no God."\*  
They are corrupt, doing abominable  
iniquity; there is none | who does good.
- <sup>2</sup>God looks down from heaven  
on the chil- | dren of man\*  
to see if there are any who understand,  
who seek | after God.
- <sup>3</sup>They have all fallen away;  
together they have be- | come corrupt;\*  
there is none who does good,  
not | even one.
- <sup>4</sup>Have those who work evil no | knowledge,\*  
who eat up my people as they eat bread,  
and do not call up- | on God?
- <sup>5</sup>There they are, in great terror,  
where there is no | terror!\*  
For God scatters the bones of him who  
encamps against you; you put them to  
shame, for God has re- | jected them.
- <sup>6</sup>Oh, that salvation for Israel  
would come out of | Zion!\*  
When God restores the fortunes  
of his people, let Jacob rejoice,  
let Israel | be glad.  
—Psalm 53

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 30*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 14:1–22

Job Continues: Death Comes Soon to All

- <sup>1</sup>"Man who is born of a woman  
is few of days and full of trouble.

<sup>2</sup>He comes out like a flower and withers;  
he flees like a shadow and continues not.

<sup>3</sup>And do you open your eyes on such a one  
and bring me into judgment with you?

<sup>4</sup>Who can bring a clean thing out  
of an unclean?  
There is not one.

<sup>5</sup>Since his days are determined,  
and the number of his months is with you,  
and you have appointed his limits  
that he cannot pass,

<sup>6</sup>look away from him and leave him alone,  
that he may enjoy, like a hired hand,  
his day.

<sup>7</sup>“For there is hope for a tree,  
if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,  
and that its shoots will not cease.

<sup>8</sup>Though its root grow old in the earth,  
and its stump die in the soil,

<sup>9</sup>yet at the scent of water it will bud  
and put out branches like a young plant.

<sup>10</sup>But a man dies and is laid low;  
man breathes his last, and where is he?

<sup>11</sup>As waters fail from a lake  
and a river wastes away and dries up,

<sup>12</sup>so a man lies down and rises not again;  
till the heavens are no more  
he will not awake  
or be roused out of his sleep.

<sup>13</sup>Oh that you would hide me in Sheol,  
that you would conceal me  
until your wrath be past,  
that you would appoint me a set time,  
and remember me!

<sup>14</sup>If a man dies, shall he live again?  
All the days of my service I would wait,  
till my renewal should come.

<sup>15</sup>You would call, and I would answer you;  
you would long for the work  
of your hands.

<sup>16</sup>For then you would number my steps;  
you would not keep watch over my sin;

<sup>17</sup>my transgression would be sealed up  
in a bag,  
and you would cover over my iniquity.

<sup>18</sup>“But the mountain falls and crumbles away,  
and the rock is removed from its place;

<sup>19</sup>the waters wear away the stones;  
the torrents wash away the soil  
of the earth;  
so you destroy the hope of man.

<sup>20</sup>You prevail forever against him,  
and he passes;  
you change his countenance,  
and send him away.

<sup>21</sup>His sons come to honor,  
and he does not know it;  
they are brought low,  
and he perceives it not.

<sup>22</sup>He feels only the pain of his own body,  
and he mourns only for himself.”

### New Testament Reading: John 6:41–59

[I Am the Bread of Life]

<sup>41</sup>So the Jews grumbled about him,  
because he said, “I am the bread that came  
down from heaven.” <sup>42</sup>They said, “Is not this  
Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and  
mother we know? How does he now say,  
‘I have come down from heaven?’” <sup>43</sup>Jesus  
answered them, “Do not grumble among  
yourselves. <sup>44</sup>No one can come to me unless  
the Father who sent me draws him. And I will  
raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup>It is written in  
the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by  
God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned  
from the Father comes to me— <sup>46</sup>not that  
anyone has seen the Father except he who  
is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup>Truly,  
truly, I say to you, whoever believes has  
eternal life. <sup>48</sup>I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your

fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup>I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

<sup>52</sup>The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” <sup>53</sup>So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup>Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup>For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup>Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup>As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. <sup>58</sup>This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” <sup>59</sup>Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

## Writing

The divine and the human nature have this personal union with each other in the person of Christ and have the communion resulting from it (in deed and truth). For this reason, there is attributed to Christ (according to the flesh) what His flesh, according to its nature and essence, cannot be by itself. Apart from this union, His flesh cannot have these attributes: His flesh is a truly life-giving food and His blood a truly life-giving drink [John 6:55]. . . . This man only, and no man besides, either in heaven or on earth, can say with truth, “Where two or three are gathered in My name,

there am I among them” (Matthew 18:20). Also, “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” [Matthew 28:20]. . . .

We hold that by these words the majesty of the man Christ is declared. Christ has received this majesty, according to His humanity, at the right hand of God’s majesty and power. So also, according to His received human nature and with the same, He can be, and also is, present where He wants to be. He is present especially in His Church and congregation on earth as Mediator, Head, King, and High Priest. This presence is not a part, or only one half of Him. Christ’s entire person is present, to which both natures belong, the divine and the human—not only according to His divinity, but also according to, and with, His received human nature. He is our Brother [Hebrews 2:17], and we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone [Genesis 2:23]. He has instituted His Holy Supper for the certain assurance and confirmation of this, so that He will be with us, and dwell, work, and be effective in us also according to that nature from which He has flesh and blood.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 76, 78

## Hymnody

Draw us to Thee,  
For then shall we  
Walk in Thy steps forever  
And hasten on  
Where Thou art gone  
To be with Thee, dear Savior.

—Draw Us to Thee (*LSB* 701:1)

## Prayer of the Day

Gracious Father, Your blessed Son came down from heaven to be the true bread that gives life to the world. Grant that Christ, the

bread of life, may live in us and we in Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B72)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord,  
Summary Content, Rule, and Norm

## 20 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Preserve me, | O God,\*  
for in you I take | refuge.
- <sup>4</sup> The sorrows of those who run after  
another god shall | multiply;\*  
their drink offerings of blood I will not  
pour out or take their names | on my lips.
- <sup>5</sup> The LORD is my chosen portion | and  
my cup;\*  
you | hold my lot.
- <sup>6</sup> The lines have fallen for me  
in pleasant | places;\*  
indeed, I have a beautiful in- | heritance.
- <sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad,  
and my whole being re- | joices;\*  
my flesh also | dwells secure.
- <sup>10</sup> For you will not abandon  
my soul | to Sheol,\*  
or let your holy one see cor- | ruption.
- <sup>11</sup> You make known to me the | path of life;\*  
in your presence there is fullness  
of joy; at your right hand are pleasures  
for- | evermore.
- Psalm 16:1, 4–6, 9–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 90*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 15:1–23, 30–35

Eliphaz Accuses: Job Does Not Fear God

<sup>1</sup>Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered  
and said:

<sup>2</sup>“Should a wise man answer  
with windy knowledge,  
and fill his belly with the east wind?

<sup>3</sup>Should he argue in unprofitable talk,  
or in words with which he  
can do no good?

<sup>4</sup>But you are doing away  
with the fear of God  
and hindering meditation  
before God.

<sup>5</sup>For your iniquity teaches your mouth,  
and you choose the tongue  
of the crafty.

<sup>6</sup>Your own mouth condemns you,  
and not I;  
your own lips testify against you.

<sup>7</sup>“Are you the first man who was born?  
Or were you brought forth  
before the hills?

<sup>8</sup>Have you listened in the council of God?  
And do you limit wisdom to yourself?

<sup>9</sup>What do you know that we do not know?  
What do you understand  
that is not clear to us?

<sup>10</sup>Both the gray-haired and the aged  
are among us,  
older than your father.

<sup>11</sup>Are the comforts of God too small  
for you,  
or the word that deals gently  
with you?

<sup>12</sup>Why does your heart carry you away,  
and why do your eyes flash,

<sup>13</sup>that you turn your spirit against God  
and bring such words out  
of your mouth?

<sup>14</sup>What is man, that he can be pure?  
Or he who is born of a woman,  
that he can be righteous?

<sup>15</sup>Behold, God puts no trust  
in his holy ones,  
and the heavens are not pure  
in his sight;

<sup>16</sup>how much less one who is abominable  
and corrupt,  
a man who drinks injustice like  
water!

<sup>17</sup>“I will show you; hear me,  
and what I have seen I will declare

<sup>18</sup>(what wise men have told,  
without hiding it from their fathers,  
<sup>19</sup>to whom alone the land was given,  
and no stranger passed among them).

<sup>20</sup>The wicked man writhes in pain  
all his days,  
through all the years that are laid up  
for the ruthless.

<sup>21</sup>Dreadful sounds are in his ears;  
in prosperity the destroyer will come  
upon him.

<sup>22</sup>He does not believe that he will return  
out of darkness,  
and he is marked for the sword.

<sup>23</sup>He wanders abroad for bread, saying,  
“Where is it?”

He knows that a day of darkness is  
ready at his hand; . . .

<sup>30</sup>he will not depart from darkness;  
the flame will dry up his shoots,  
and by the breath of his mouth he  
will depart.

<sup>31</sup>Let him not trust in emptiness,  
deceiving himself,  
for emptiness will be his payment.

<sup>32</sup>It will be paid in full before his time,  
and his branch will not be green.

<sup>33</sup>He will shake off his unripe grape like  
the vine,  
and cast off his blossom  
like the olive tree.

<sup>34</sup>For the company of the godless  
is barren,  
and fire consumes the tents  
of bribery.

<sup>35</sup>They conceive trouble  
and give birth to evil,  
and their womb prepares deceit.”

### New Testament Reading: John 6:60–71

The Words of Eternal Life

<sup>60</sup>When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” <sup>61</sup>But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? <sup>62</sup>Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? <sup>63</sup>It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup>But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) <sup>65</sup>And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

<sup>66</sup>After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. <sup>67</sup>So Jesus said to the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” <sup>68</sup>Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, <sup>69</sup>and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” <sup>70</sup>Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet

one of you is a devil.”<sup>71</sup> He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him.

## Writing

Can anyone, as some think, be saved in his religion and faith, without the Word of God, but having formed a good intention?

By no means. For God says only of His Word that it is the Word of life . . . [and] the Word of salvation . . . [that] saves our souls.

But Scripture declares of all other sects, conceived beyond, outside of, or contrary to the Word of God, that they are without Christ, outside the promises of the covenant, having no hope, and without God in the world. . . . And flesh and blood does not reveal this Christ, but the Father in the Word and through the Word. . . .

Where is that Word of God to be looked for, and whence is [it] to be sought? Are new and special inspirations and revelations to be expected?

At one time God revealed His Word by various ways and means. For sometimes, appearing Himself to the holy fathers, He spoke in their presence, sometimes through prophets inspired and moved by His Spirit; finally He spoke to mankind through His Son and the apostles. . . . But He gave us neither command nor promise to expect that kind of inspirations or revelations. Yet for the sake of posterity He saw to it that this Word of His, first revealed by preaching and confirmed by subsequent miracles, was later put into writing by faithful witnesses. And to that very same Word, comprehended in the prophetic and apostolic writings, He bound His church, so that whenever we want to know or show that a teaching is God’s Word, this should be our

axiom: Thus it is written; thus Scripture speaks and testifies.

—Martin Chemnitz

## Hymnody

My heart’s delight,  
My crown most bright,  
O Christ, my joy forever.  
Not wealth nor pride  
Nor fortune’s tide  
Our bonds of love shall sever.  
You are my Lord;  
Your precious Word  
Shall guide my way  
And help me stay  
Forever in Your presence.

—Seek Where You May to Find a Way  
(*LSB* 557:4)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us to know Your Son, Jesus, to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow His steps in the way that leads to life eternal; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (B73)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord I 1–10

21 FEBRUARY

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup>How lovely is your | dwelling place,\*  
O | LORD of hosts!
- <sup>2</sup>My soul longs, yes, faints  
for the courts | of the LORD;\*  
my heart and flesh sing for joy  
to the | living God.
- <sup>3</sup>Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may | lay her young,\*  
at your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
my King | and my God.
- <sup>4</sup>Blessèd are those who dwell | in your house,\*  
ever sing- | ing your praise!
- <sup>8</sup>O LORD God of hosts, | hear my prayer;\*  
give ear, O God of | Jacob!
- <sup>9</sup>Behold our shield, | O God;\*  
look on the face of your a- | nointed!
- <sup>10</sup>For a day in your courts is better  
than a thousand | elsewhere.\*  
I would rather be a doorkeeper  
in the house of my God than dwell  
in the tents of | wickedness.
- <sup>11</sup>For the LORD God is a sun and shield;  
the LORD bestows favor and | honor.\*  
No good thing does he withhold from  
those who walk up- | rightly.
- <sup>12</sup>O | LORD of hosts,\*  
blessèd is the one who | trusts in you!  
—Psalm 84:1–4, 8–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 64*

**Old Testament Reading: Job 16:1–22**

Job Replies: Miserable Comforters Are You

<sup>1</sup>Then Job answered and said:

<sup>2</sup>“I have heard many such things;  
miserable comforters are you all.

- <sup>3</sup>Shall windy words have an end?  
Or what provokes you  
that you answer?
- <sup>4</sup>I also could speak as you do,  
if you were in my place;  
I could join words together against you  
and shake my head at you.
- <sup>5</sup>I could strengthen you with my mouth,  
and the solace of my lips would  
assuage your pain.
- <sup>6</sup>“If I speak, my pain is not assuaged,  
and if I forbear, how much  
of it leaves me?
- <sup>7</sup>Surely now God has worn me out;  
he has made desolate all my company.
- <sup>8</sup>And he has shriveled me up,  
which is a witness against me,  
and my leanness has risen up against me;  
it testifies to my face.
- <sup>9</sup>He has torn me in his wrath  
and hated me;  
he has gnashed his teeth at me;  
my adversary sharpens his eyes  
against me.
- <sup>10</sup>Men have gaped at me with their mouth;  
they have struck me insolently  
on the cheek;  
they mass themselves together  
against me.
- <sup>11</sup>God gives me up to the ungodly  
and casts me into the hands  
of the wicked.
- <sup>12</sup>I was at ease, and he broke me apart;  
he seized me by the neck and dashed  
me to pieces;  
he set me up as his target;  
<sup>13</sup>his archers surround me.  
He slashes open my kidneys  
and does not spare;  
he pours out my gall on the ground.

<sup>14</sup>He breaks me with breach upon breach;  
 he runs upon me like a warrior.  
<sup>15</sup>I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin  
 and have laid my strength  
 in the dust.  
<sup>16</sup>My face is red with weeping,  
 and on my eyelids is deep darkness,  
<sup>17</sup>although there is no violence  
 in my hands,  
 and my prayer is pure.  
<sup>18</sup>“O earth, cover not my blood,  
 and let my cry find no resting place.  
<sup>19</sup>Even now, behold,  
 my witness is in heaven,  
 and he who testifies  
 for me is on high.  
<sup>20</sup>My friends scorn me;  
 my eye pours out tears to God,  
<sup>21</sup>that he would argue the case  
 of a man with God,  
 as a son of man does  
 with his neighbor.  
<sup>22</sup>For when a few years have come  
 I shall go the way from which  
 I shall not return.”

### New Testament Reading: John 7:1–13

Jesus at the Feast of Booths

<sup>1</sup>After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. <sup>2</sup>Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. <sup>3</sup>So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. <sup>4</sup>For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” <sup>5</sup>For not even his brothers believed in him. <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. <sup>7</sup>The world cannot hate

you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. <sup>8</sup>You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.” <sup>9</sup>After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

<sup>10</sup>But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. <sup>11</sup>The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, “Where is he?” <sup>12</sup>And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, “He is a good man,” others said, “No, he is leading the people astray.” <sup>13</sup>Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.

### Writing

XIII: The Use of the Sacraments

Our churches teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but even more, to be signs and testimonies of God's will toward us. They were instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Therefore, we must use the Sacraments in such a way that faith, which believes the promises offered and set forth through the Sacraments, is increased (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

Therefore, they condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify simply by the act of doing them. They condemn those who do not teach that faith, which believes that sins are forgiven, is required in the use of the Sacraments.

XIV: Order in the Church

Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call.

XV: Church Ceremonies

Our churches teach that ceremonies ought to be observed that may be observed without sin. Also, ceremonies and other practices that are profitable for tranquility and good order in the Church (in particular, holy days, festivals, and the like) ought to be observed.

Yet, the people are taught that consciences are not to be burdened as though observing such things was necessary for salvation (Colossians 2:16–17). They are also taught that human traditions instituted to make atonement with God, to merit grace, and to make satisfaction for sins are opposed to the Gospel and the doctrine of faith. So vows and traditions concerning meats and days, and so forth, instituted to merit grace and to make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel.

—Augsburg Confession XIII–XV

**Hymnody**

“Blessed are God’s sons and daughters,  
 Making peace where there is strife.  
 Blessed are the persecuted,  
 Who for righteousness lose life;  
 Their reward is great in heaven,  
 In the kingdom up above—  
 So be glad to share My suff’ring  
 And rejoice to know My love.”

—Jesus Sat with His Disciples  
 (LSB 932:3)

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord Jesus Christ, Your time has come, for You have traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover from death to life. Help us to live knowing that the time of our redemption is at hand as You continue to dwell among us at the feast of Your very body and blood, a

foretaste of the feast to come; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1149)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Epitome of the Formula of Concord I 11–25

**22 FEBRUARY**

**Psalmody**

- <sup>15</sup> My eyes are ever | toward the LORD,\*  
 for he will pluck my feet out | of the net.
- <sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me,\*  
 for I am lonely and af- | flicted.
- <sup>17</sup> The troubles of my heart | are enlarged; \*  
 bring me out of my dis- | tresses.
- <sup>18</sup> Consider my affliction and my | trouble,\*  
 and forgive | all my sins.
- <sup>19</sup> Consider how many | are my foes,\*  
 and with what violent hatred they | hate  
 me.
- <sup>20</sup> Oh, guard my soul, and de- | liver me! \*  
 Let me not be put to shame, for I take  
 ref- | uge in you.
- <sup>21</sup> May integrity and uprightness  
 pre- | serve me,  
 for I | wait for you.
- <sup>22</sup> Redeem Israel, | O God,\*  
 out of all his | troubles.  
 —Psalm 25:15–22

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 114*

**Old Testament Reading: Job 17:1–16**

Job Continues: Where Then Is My Hope?

- <sup>1</sup>“My spirit is broken; my days are extinct;  
 the graveyard is ready for me.

- <sup>2</sup>Surely there are mockers about me,  
and my eye dwells on their provocation.
- <sup>3</sup>“Lay down a pledge for me with yourself;  
who is there who will put up security for  
me?”
- <sup>4</sup>Since you have closed their hearts to  
understanding,  
therefore you will not let them triumph.
- <sup>5</sup>He who informs against his friends to get a  
share of their property—  
the eyes of his children will fail.
- <sup>6</sup>“He has made me a byword of the peoples,  
and I am one before whom men spit.
- <sup>7</sup>My eye has grown dim from vexation,  
and all my members are like a shadow.
- <sup>8</sup>The upright are appalled at this,  
and the innocent stirs himself up against  
the godless.
- <sup>9</sup>Yet the righteous holds to his way,  
and he who has clean hands grows  
stronger and stronger.
- <sup>10</sup>But you, come on again, all of you,  
and I shall not find a wise man among  
you.
- <sup>11</sup>My days are past; my plans are broken off,  
the desires of my heart.
- <sup>12</sup>They make night into day:  
‘The light,’ they say, ‘is near to the  
darkness.’
- <sup>13</sup>If I hope for Sheol as my house,  
if I make my bed in darkness,
- <sup>14</sup>if I say to the pit, ‘You are my father,’  
and to the worm, ‘My mother,’ or ‘My  
sister,’
- <sup>15</sup>where then is my hope?  
Who will see my hope?
- <sup>16</sup>Will it go down to the bars of Sheol?  
Shall we descend together into the dust?”

### New Testament Reading: John 7:14–31

[Jesus at the Feast of Booths]

<sup>14</sup>About the middle of the feast Jesus  
went up into the temple and began teaching.  
<sup>15</sup>The Jews therefore marveled, saying, “How  
is it that this man has learning, when he has  
never studied?” <sup>16</sup>So Jesus answered them,  
“My teaching is not mine, but his who sent  
me. <sup>17</sup>If anyone’s will is to do God’s will,  
he will know whether the teaching is from  
God or whether I am speaking on my own  
authority. <sup>18</sup>The one who speaks on his own  
authority seeks his own glory; but the one  
who seeks the glory of him who sent him is  
true, and in him there is no falsehood. <sup>19</sup>Has  
not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you  
keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?”  
<sup>20</sup>The crowd answered, “You have a demon!  
Who is seeking to kill you?” <sup>21</sup>Jesus answered  
them, “I did one work, and you all marvel at  
it. <sup>22</sup>Moses gave you circumcision (not that  
it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and  
you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup>If on  
the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so  
that the law of Moses may not be broken, are  
you angry with me because on the Sabbath  
I made a man’s whole body well? <sup>24</sup>Do not  
judge by appearances, but judge with right  
judgment.”

Can This Be the Christ?

<sup>25</sup>Some of the people of Jerusalem  
therefore said, “Is not this the man whom  
they seek to kill? <sup>26</sup>And here he is, speaking  
openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it  
be that the authorities really know that this  
is the Christ? <sup>27</sup>But we know where this man  
comes from, and when the Christ appears,  
no one will know where he comes from.” <sup>28</sup>So  
Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple,  
“You know me, and you know where I come

from? But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. <sup>29</sup>I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.” <sup>30</sup>So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. <sup>31</sup>Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”

### Writing

When he himself says, “I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me,” this is the same kind of saying as, “My doctrine is not mine.” For if anyone possesses something, not of himself but from God, he should speak of it as God’s rather than his own. But no man has the truth he teaches, or a just will, from himself; these come from God. Christ came, then, not to do his own will, but to do the Father’s will, since the just will which he had came not from his humanity but from his divinity. But to say that God “spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us” simply means that he did not set him free. Many statements like this are found in Holy Scripture. Again, when he says, “Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt,” and, “if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done,” by his own will he means the natural desire for safety, by which his human flesh shrank from the pain of death. It is true that he speaks of the Father’s will, but not because the Father preferred the death of his Son to life—rather, because the Father was unwilling for the human race to be restored unless man performed a great act, equal to

the Son’s death. Since reason did not demand what another could not do, the Son says that the Father wills his death, while he himself prefers to suffer death rather than leave the human race unsaved.

—Anselm of Canterbury

### Hymnody

“Yes, Father, yes, most willingly  
I’ll bear what You command Me.  
My will conforms to Your decree,  
I’ll do what You have asked Me.”  
O wondrous Love, what have You done!  
The Father offers up His Son,  
Desiring our salvation.  
O Love, how strong You are to save!  
You lay the One into the grave  
Who built the earth’s foundation.

—A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth  
(*LSB* 438:3)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L50)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord II 1–6

## 23 FEBRUARY

*Polycarp of Smyrna, Pastor and Martyr*

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> As a deer pants for | flowing streams,\*  
so pants my soul for you, | O God.
- <sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the | living God.\*  
When shall I come  
and appear be- | fore God?
- <sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food | day  
and night,\*  
while they say to me continually,  
“Where | is your God?”
- <sup>4</sup> These things I remember,  
as I pour | out my soul.\*  
how I would go with the throng and lead  
them in procession to the | house of God  
with glad shouts and | songs of praise,\*  
a multitude keeping | festival.
- <sup>5</sup> Why are you cast down, O my soul, and  
why are you in turmoil with- | in me?\*
- Hope in God; for I shall again praise  
him, my salvation | <sup>6</sup> and my God.
- <sup>9</sup> I say to God, my rock:  
“Why have you for- | gotten me?\*
- Why do I go mourning because  
of the oppression of the | enemy?”
- <sup>10</sup> As with a deadly wound in my bones,  
my adversaries | taunt me,\*  
while they say to me continually,  
“Where | is your God?”
- <sup>11</sup> Why are you cast down, O my soul, and  
why are you in turmoil with- | in me?\*
- Hope in God; for I shall again praise  
him, my salvation | and my God.
- Psalm 42:1–6a, 9–11

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 52*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 18:1–21

Bildad Speaks: God Punishes the Wicked

<sup>1</sup>Then Bildad the Shuhite answered  
and said:

- <sup>2</sup>“How long will you hunt for words?  
Consider, and then we will speak.
- <sup>3</sup>Why are we counted as cattle?  
Why are we stupid in your sight?
- <sup>4</sup>You who tear yourself in your anger,  
shall the earth be forsaken for you,  
or the rock be removed out  
of its place?
- <sup>5</sup>“Indeed, the light of the wicked  
is put out,  
and the flame of his fire does not shine.
- <sup>6</sup>The light is dark in his tent,  
and his lamp above him is put out.
- <sup>7</sup>His strong steps are shortened,  
and his own schemes  
throw him down.
- <sup>8</sup>For he is cast into a net by his own feet,  
and he walks on its mesh.
- <sup>9</sup>A trap seizes him by the heel;  
a snare lays hold of him.
- <sup>10</sup>A rope is hidden for him in the ground,  
a trap for him in the path.
- <sup>11</sup>Terrors frighten him on every side,  
and chase him at his heels.
- <sup>12</sup>His strength is famished,  
and calamity is ready  
for his stumbling.
- <sup>13</sup>It consumes the parts of his skin;  
the firstborn of death consumes  
his limbs.
- <sup>14</sup>He is torn from the tent  
in which he trusted  
and is brought to the king of terrors.
- <sup>15</sup>In his tent dwells that which  
is none of his;  
sulfur is scattered over his  
habitation.

- <sup>16</sup>His roots dry up beneath,  
and his branches wither above.
- <sup>17</sup>His memory perishes from the earth,  
and he has no name in the street.
- <sup>18</sup>He is thrust from light into darkness,  
and driven out of the world.
- <sup>19</sup>He has no posterity or progeny among  
his people,  
and no survivor where he used to live.
- <sup>20</sup>They of the west are appalled at his day,  
and horror seizes them of the east.
- <sup>21</sup>Surely such are the dwellings of the  
unrighteous,  
such is the place of him who knows  
not God.”

### New Testament Reading: John 7:32–53

#### Officers Sent to Arrest Jesus

<sup>32</sup>The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. <sup>33</sup>Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. <sup>34</sup>You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come.” <sup>35</sup>The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? <sup>36</sup>What does he mean by saying, ‘You will seek me and you will not find me,’ and, ‘Where I am you cannot come?’”

#### Rivers of Living Water

<sup>37</sup>On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” <sup>39</sup>Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were

to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

#### Division Among the People

<sup>40</sup>When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.” <sup>41</sup>Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? <sup>42</sup>Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” <sup>43</sup>So there was a division among the people over him. <sup>44</sup>Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

<sup>45</sup>The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?” <sup>46</sup>The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!” <sup>47</sup>The Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived? <sup>48</sup>Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? <sup>49</sup>But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.” <sup>50</sup>Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, <sup>51</sup>“Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?” <sup>52</sup>They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”

<sup>53</sup>They went each to his own house.

### Writing

*Polycarp* means a Christian who bears much fruit. This is a true, Christian name, for the Lord Jesus said in John 15:16, “I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.” For them, the noble seed of the Holy Gospel falls on good ground; they hear the Word and keep it in a good heart and bring forth fruit in patience (Luke 8:16). This Polycarp was a disciple and diligent hearer of John the apostle and evangelist, and he called the heretic

Marcion, who met him once, a “child of the devil” without any fear. You see, no one should betray the truth with silence. When people demanded that he deny the Christian religion, he said, “For eighty-six years I have served Christ, and He has never injured me. Therefore how could I curse and blaspheme my King, who has given me salvation?” When he was ninety years old, people wanted to burn him. In the midst of the fire, he prayed, “O God, the Father of Your Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of You, the maker of all creation, I call upon You, I confess You, that You are true God; I glorify You because of the high priest, Your beloved Son, with the Holy Spirit; receive me and make me a sharer in the resurrection of Your saints. Amen.” Now since the fire spared him, as it did for the three confessors in Daniel 3:23, he was stabbed with a sword. Three days previously, he had dreamed that his pillow was burning; from this he quickly concluded that he would sit in the fire and would sweat. Dreams that cause us to pray and pursue Christian devotion, for which we also have clear admonitions in God’s Word, are not to be despised.

—Valerius Herberger

### Hymnody

See, the streams of living waters,  
Springing from eternal love,  
Well supply your sons and daughters  
And all fear of want remove.  
Who can faint while such a river  
Ever will their thirst assuage?  
Grace, which like the Lord, the giver,  
Never fails from age to age.

—Glorious Things of You Are Spoken  
(LSB 648:2)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, the maker of heaven and earth, You gave boldness to confess Jesus Christ as King and Savior and steadfastness to die for the faith to Your venerable servant, the holy and gentle Polycarp. Grant us grace to follow his example in sharing the cup of Christ’s suffering so that we may also share in His glorious resurrection; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1150)

### Polycarp of Smyrna, Pastor and Martyr

Born around AD 69, Polycarp was a central figure in the Early Church. A disciple of the evangelist John, he linked the first generation of believers to later Christians. After serving for many years as bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp was arrested, tried, and executed for his faith on February 23, in AD 155 or 156. An eyewitness narrative of his death, *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, continues to encourage believers in times of persecution.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord II 7–19

## 24 FEBRUARY

*St. Matthias, Apostle*

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> I will extol you, O LORD, for you  
have | drawn me up\*  
and have not let my foes  
rejoice | over me.

<sup>2</sup>O LORD my God, I cried to | you for help,\*  
and you have | healed me.

<sup>3</sup>O LORD, you have brought up my soul | from  
Sheol;\*  
you restored me to life from among those  
who go down | to the pit.

<sup>4</sup>Sing praises to the LORD, O | you his saints,\*  
and give thanks to his | holy name.

<sup>5</sup>For his anger is but for a moment,  
and his favor is for a | lifetime.\*  
Weeping may tarry for the night,  
but joy comes with the | morning.

<sup>8</sup>To you, O | LORD, I cry,\*  
and to the Lord I plead for | mercy:

<sup>9</sup>“What profit is there in my death,  
if I go down | to the pit?\*”  
Will the dust praise you?  
Will it tell of your | faithfulness?

<sup>10</sup>Hear, O LORD, and be merci- | ful to me!\*  
O LORD, be my | helper!”

<sup>11</sup>You have turned for me my mourning  
into | dancing;\*  
you have loosed my sackcloth and  
clothed me with | gladness,

<sup>12</sup>that my glory may sing your praise  
and not be | silent.\*  
O LORD my God,  
I will give thanks to you for- | ever!  
—Psalm 30:1–5, 8–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 22*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Job 19:1–12, 21–27**

Job Replies: My Redeemer Lives

<sup>1</sup>Then Job answered and said:

<sup>2</sup>“How long will you torment me  
and break me in pieces with words?  
<sup>3</sup>These ten times you have cast reproach  
upon me;  
are you not ashamed to wrong me?

<sup>4</sup>And even if it be true that I have erred,  
my error remains with myself.

<sup>5</sup>If indeed you magnify yourselves against  
me  
and make my disgrace an argument  
against me,  
<sup>6</sup>know then that God has put me  
in the wrong  
and closed his net about me.

<sup>7</sup>Behold, I cry out, ‘Violence!’  
but I am not answered;  
I call for help, but there is no justice.

<sup>8</sup>He has walled up my way,  
so that I cannot pass,  
and he has set darkness  
upon my paths.

<sup>9</sup>He has stripped from me my glory  
and taken the crown from my head.

<sup>10</sup>He breaks me down on every side,  
and I am gone,  
and my hope has he pulled up  
like a tree.

<sup>11</sup>He has kindled his wrath against me  
and counts me as his adversary.

<sup>12</sup>His troops come on together;  
they have cast up their siege ramp  
against me  
and encamp around my tent. . . .

<sup>21</sup>Have mercy on me, have mercy on me,  
O you my friends,  
for the hand of God has touched me!

<sup>22</sup>Why do you, like God, pursue me?  
Why are you not satisfied  
with my flesh?

<sup>23</sup>“Oh that my words were written!  
Oh that they were inscribed  
in a book!  
<sup>24</sup>Oh that with an iron pen and lead  
they were engraved  
in the rock forever!

<sup>25</sup>For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and at the last he will stand  
upon the earth.

<sup>26</sup>And after my skin has been thus  
destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I shall see God,

<sup>27</sup>whom I shall see for myself,  
and my eyes shall behold,  
and not another.

My heart faints within me!"

### New Testament Reading: John 8:1–20

[The Woman Caught in Adultery]

<sup>1</sup>But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup>Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. <sup>3</sup>The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst <sup>4</sup>they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup>Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" <sup>6</sup>This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup>And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." <sup>8</sup>And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup>But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup>Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" <sup>11</sup>She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

I Am the Light of the World

<sup>12</sup>Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." <sup>13</sup>So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." <sup>14</sup>Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup>You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup>Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. <sup>17</sup>In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. <sup>18</sup>I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." <sup>19</sup>They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." <sup>20</sup>These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

### Writing

"The kingdom of Christ is not one of condemnation. I am not here to condemn you, but to remit the sins of those who, like you, are where death, the devil, evil consciences, accusers, and judges have come to plague them. The slogan in My kingdom is: I forgive you your sin; for in My kingdom no one is without forgiveness of sins. Therefore you, too, must have forgiveness. My kingdom must not be in disorder. All who enter it and dwell in it must be sinners. But as sinners they cannot live without the forgiveness of sins." If I am a sinner, the

matter is not ended there; the sins must be forgiven. Thus none but sinners come into this kingdom. But do not let this prompt you to say: “Well, we will remain in sin.” No, you must learn to feel and recognize your sin. These Pharisees did not have to become sinners; they were sinners already, and they became even greater sinners when Christ uncovered their sins with the words: “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” A sinner is a person who feels his sin. The Pharisees, these rogues, were no sinners; but they became sinners when Christ said: “Let him who is without sin, etc.” Now they became sinners. But they despaired and slunk away. In their arrogance they hid their sin and would not await Christ’s second statement: “Neither do I condemn you.”

Thus only those sinners belong in the kingdom of Christ who recognize their sin, feel it, and then catch hold of the Word of Christ spoken here: “I do not condemn you.” These people constitute the membership of Christ’s kingdom. He admits no saint; He blows them all away; He expels from the church all who lay claim to holiness. If sinners enter, they do not remain sinners. He spreads His cloak over their sins and says: “If you have sinned, I remit your sins and cover them.” To be sure, sin is there. But the Lord in this kingdom closes His eyes to it, covers it, forgives it, and does not impute it to the sinner. So a living saint and member of Christ stands here, made out of an adulteress who had been infested with sin but whose sin is now forgiven and covered. Even if sinners are knaves and criminals, their sins will be forgiven, as long as they feel them, repent of them, and ask God for forgiveness. If you have tasted the Law and sin, and if you know

the ache of sin, then look here, and see how sweet, in comparison, the grace of God is, the grace which is offered to us in the Gospel. This is the absolution which the adulteress receives here from the Lord Christ.

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

I thank Thee, Jesus, Sun from heaven,  
Whose radiance hath brought light to me;  
I thank Thee, who hast richly given  
All that could make me glad and free;  
I thank Thee that my soul is healed  
By what Thy lips revealed.

—Thee Will I Love, My Strength,  
My Tower (*LSB* 694:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You chose Your servant Matthias to be numbered among the Twelve. Grant that Your Church, ever preserved from false teachers, may be taught and guided by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F13)

### St. Matthias, Apostle

St. Matthias is one of the lesser-known apostles. According to the Early Church Fathers, Matthias was one of the seventy-two sent out by Jesus in Luke 10:1–20. After the ascension, Matthias was chosen by lot to fill the vacancy in the Twelve resulting from the death of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:16–25). Early Church tradition places Matthias in a number of locations. Some historians suggest that he went to Ethiopia; others place him in Armenia, the first nation to adopt Christianity as a national religion. Martyred

for his faith, Matthias may well have met his death at Colchis in Asia Minor, around AD 50. The Church of St. Matthias at Trier, Germany, claims the honor of being the final burial site for Matthias, the only one of the Twelve to be buried in Europe north of the Alps.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord III 1–11

## 25 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man  
who | fears the LORD,\*  
who greatly delights  
in his com- | mandments!
- <sup>2</sup>His offspring will be mighty | in the land;\*  
the generation of the upright | will  
be blessed.
- <sup>3</sup>Wealth and riches are | in his house,\*  
and his righteousness endures for- | ever.
- <sup>4</sup>Light dawns in the darkness  
for the | upright;\*  
he is gracious, merciful, and | righteous.
- <sup>5</sup>It is well with the man who deals  
generous- | ly and lends;\*  
who conducts his affairs with | justice.
- <sup>6</sup>For the righteous will nev- | er be moved;\*  
he will be remembered for- | ever.
- <sup>7</sup>He is not afraid of | bad news;\*  
his heart is firm, trusting | in the LORD.
- <sup>8</sup>His heart is steady; he will not | be afraid,\*  
until he looks in triumph  
on his adver- | saries.
- <sup>9</sup>He has distributed freely; he has given to the  
poor; his righteousness endures for- | ever;\*

his horn is exalted in | honor.

- <sup>10</sup>The wicked man sees it and is angry; he  
gnashes his teeth and | melts away;\*  
the desire of the wicked will | perish!  
—Psalm 112:1–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:57–64*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 20:1–23, 29

Zophar Speaks: The Wicked Will Suffer

<sup>1</sup>Then Zophar the Naamathite answered  
and said:

- <sup>2</sup>“Therefore my thoughts answer me,  
because of my haste within me.
- <sup>3</sup>I hear censure that insults me,  
and out of my understanding  
a spirit answers me.
- <sup>4</sup>Do you not know this from of old,  
since man was placed on earth,  
<sup>5</sup>that the exulting of the wicked is short,  
and the joy of the godless  
but for a moment?
- <sup>6</sup>Though his height mount up  
to the heavens,  
and his head reach to the clouds,  
<sup>7</sup>he will perish forever like his own dung;  
those who have seen him will say,  
‘Where is he?’
- <sup>8</sup>He will fly away like a dream  
and not be found;  
he will be chased away  
like a vision of the night.
- <sup>9</sup>The eye that saw him  
will see him no more,  
nor will his place  
any more behold him.
- <sup>10</sup>His children will seek the favor  
of the poor,  
and his hands will give back  
his wealth.

<sup>11</sup>His bones are full of his youthful vigor,  
but it will lie down with him  
in the dust.

<sup>12</sup>“Though evil is sweet in his mouth,  
though he hides it under his tongue,  
<sup>13</sup>though he is loath to let it go  
and holds it in his mouth,  
<sup>14</sup>yet his food is turned in his stomach;  
it is the venom of cobras within him.

<sup>15</sup>He swallows down riches  
and vomits them up again;  
God casts them out of his belly.

<sup>16</sup>He will suck the poison of cobras;  
the tongue of a viper will kill him.

<sup>17</sup>He will not look upon the rivers,  
the streams flowing with honey  
and curds.

<sup>18</sup>He will give back the fruit of his toil  
and will not swallow it down;  
from the profit of his trading  
he will get no enjoyment.

<sup>19</sup>For he has crushed and abandoned  
the poor;  
he has seized a house  
that he did not build.

<sup>20</sup>“Because he knew no contentment  
in his belly,  
he will not let anything in which  
he delights escape him.

<sup>21</sup>There was nothing left  
after he had eaten;  
therefore his prosperity  
will not endure.

<sup>22</sup>In the fullness of his sufficiency  
he will be in distress;  
the hand of everyone in misery  
will come against him.

<sup>23</sup>To fill his belly to the full,  
God will send his burning anger  
against him

and rain it upon him  
into his body. . . .

<sup>29</sup>This is the wicked man’s portion  
from God,  
the heritage decreed  
for him by God.”

### New Testament Reading: John 8:21–38

[I Am the Light of the World]

<sup>21</sup>So he said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.” <sup>22</sup>So the Jews said, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come?’” <sup>23</sup>He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup>I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.” <sup>25</sup>So they said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup>I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” <sup>27</sup>They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. <sup>28</sup>So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. <sup>29</sup>And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” <sup>30</sup>As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

The Truth Will Set You Free

<sup>31</sup>So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you

free.”<sup>33</sup>They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’”

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup>The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. <sup>36</sup>So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. <sup>37</sup>I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. <sup>38</sup>I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”

## Writing

He serves freely who freely does the will of his master. Accordingly he who is slave to sin is free to sin. But thereafter he will not be free to do right unless he is delivered from the bondage of sin and begins to be the servant of righteousness. This, then, is true liberty: the joy that comes in doing what is right. At the same time, it is also devoted service in obedience to righteous precept.

But how would a man, bound and sold, get back his liberty to do good, unless he could regain it from Him whose voice said, “If the Son shall make you free, then you will be free indeed”? But before this process begins in man, could anyone glory in his good works as if they were acts of his free will, when he is not yet free to act rightly? He could do this only if, puffed up in proud vanity, he were merely boasting. This attitude is what the apostle was reproofing when he said, “By grace you have been saved by faith.”

And lest men should arrogate to themselves saving faith as their own work and not understand it as a divine gift, the

same apostle who says somewhere else that he had “obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy” makes here an additional comment: “And this is not of yourselves, rather it is a gift of God—not because of works either, lest any man should boast.” But then, lest it be supposed that the faithful are lacking in good works, he added further, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has prepared beforehand for us to walk in them.”

—Augustine of Hippo

## Hymnody

Thanks we give and adoration  
For Your Gospel’s joyful sound.  
May the fruits of Your salvation  
In our hearts and lives abound.  
Ever faithful, ever faithful  
To Your truth may we be found.

—Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing  
(*LSB* 924:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F33)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord III 12–23 and IV 1–4

26 FEBRUARY

**Psalmody**

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, how many | are my foes!\*  
 Many are rising a- | gainst me;
- <sup>2</sup> many are saying | of my soul,\*  
 there is no salvation for | him in God.
- <sup>3</sup> But you, O LORD, are a shield a- | bout me,\*  
 my glory, and the lifter | of my head.
- <sup>4</sup> I cried aloud | to the LORD,\*  
 and he answered me from his | holy hill.
- <sup>5</sup> I lay | down and slept,\*  
 I woke again, for the LORD sus- | tained  
 me.
- <sup>6</sup> I will not be afraid of many thousands  
 of | people\*  
 who have set themselves against me | all  
 around.
- <sup>7</sup> Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God!  
 For you strike all my enemies | on the cheek,\*  
 you break the teeth of the | wicked.
- <sup>8</sup> Salvation belongs | to the LORD;\*  
 your blessing be on your | people!  
 —Psalm 3

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:73–80*

**Old Testament Reading: Job 21:1–21**

Job Replies: The Wicked Do Prosper

- <sup>1</sup>Then Job answered and said:
- <sup>2</sup>“Keep listening to my words,  
 and let this be your comfort.
- <sup>3</sup>Bear with me, and I will speak,  
 and after I have spoken, mock on.
- <sup>4</sup>As for me, is my complaint against man?  
 Why should I not be impatient?
- <sup>5</sup>Look at me and be appalled,  
 and lay your hand over your mouth.
- <sup>6</sup>When I remember, I am dismayed,  
 and shuddering seizes my flesh.

- <sup>7</sup>Why do the wicked live,  
 reach old age, and grow mighty  
 in power?
- <sup>8</sup>Their offspring are established  
 in their presence,  
 and their descendants  
 before their eyes.
- <sup>9</sup>Their houses are safe from fear,  
 and no rod of God is upon them.
- <sup>10</sup>Their bull breeds without fail;  
 their cow calves and does not  
 miscarry.
- <sup>11</sup>They send out their little boys  
 like a flock,  
 and their children dance.
- <sup>12</sup>They sing to the tambourine  
 and the lyre  
 and rejoice to the sound of the pipe.
- <sup>13</sup>They spend their days in prosperity,  
 and in peace they go down to Sheol.
- <sup>14</sup>They say to God, ‘Depart from us!  
 We do not desire the knowledge  
 of your ways.
- <sup>15</sup>What is the Almighty,  
 that we should serve him?  
 And what profit do we get  
 if we pray to him?’
- <sup>16</sup>Behold, is not their prosperity  
 in their hand?  
 The counsel of the wicked is far  
 from me.
- <sup>17</sup>“How often is it that the lamp  
 of the wicked is put out?  
 That their calamity comes  
 upon them?  
 That God distributes pains  
 in his anger?
- <sup>18</sup>That they are like straw  
 before the wind,  
 and like chaff that the storm  
 carries away?

<sup>19</sup>You say, ‘God stores up their iniquity for their children.’

Let him pay it out to them,  
that they may know it.

<sup>20</sup>Let their own eyes see their destruction,  
and let them drink of the wrath  
of the Almighty.

<sup>21</sup>For what do they care for their houses  
after them,  
when the number of their months  
is cut off?”

*Additional Reading: Job 21:22–30:15*

### **New Testament Reading: John 8:39–59**

You Are of Your Father the Devil

<sup>39</sup>They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, <sup>40</sup>but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>41</sup>You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup>Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. <sup>44</sup>You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup>But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. <sup>46</sup>Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup>Whoever is of God

hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

Before Abraham Was, I Am

<sup>48</sup>The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” <sup>49</sup>Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. <sup>50</sup>Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. <sup>51</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”

<sup>52</sup>The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ <sup>53</sup>Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?” <sup>54</sup>Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’ <sup>55</sup>But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. <sup>56</sup>Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” <sup>57</sup>So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” <sup>58</sup>Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” <sup>59</sup>So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

### **Writing**

For there is one and the same church, one and the same faith, Eph. 4:4–6, and one way of being justified by which all who would be saved have been justified from the foundation of the world. Therefore the Epistle to the Hebrews in 13:8, does not limit

the work of Christ only to the time of the New Testament but extends it also to the Old Testament, for this “Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Hence in John 8:56 Abraham saw Christ’s day and rejoiced. Paul in Rom. 4:1ff. carefully adduces the example of Abraham and David in this discussion of the article of justification to show that all, as many as have been justified from the beginning of the world, have been justified in no other way than through faith in Christ. But if anyone carefully looks at the speech of God to Cain in Gen. 4:7, he will come to understand that even before Moses, the moral law, and before the birth of Christ, the doctrine of the free remission of sins had been taught. For in regard to curbing lusts God said, “Your lust shall be under you” (Vulgate). In regard to the free remission of sins He says, “If you do righteously,” that is, by faith in the Messiah who is to come, “there will be a lightening or the remission of your sins.”

—Martin Chemnitz

### Hymnody

Almighty Father, in Your Son  
 You loved us when not yet begun  
 Was this old earth’s foundation!  
 Your Son has ransomed us in love  
 To live in Him here and above:  
 This is Your great salvation.  
 Alleluia!

Christ the living,  
 To us giving  
 Life forever,

Keeps us Yours and fails us never!

—O Morning Star, How Fair and  
 Bright (*LSB* 395:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, You have given us grace to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity by the confession of a true faith and to worship the Unity in the power of the Divine Majesty. Keep us steadfast in this faith and defend us from all adversities; for You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, live and reign, one God, now and forever. (L52)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord IV 5–19

## 27 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

<sup>5</sup> Blessed is he whose help is the God  
 of | Jacob,\*

whose hope is in the | LORD his God,

<sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth, the sea,  
 and all that is | in them,\*

who keeps faith for- | ever;

<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for | the oppressed,\*  
 who gives food to the | hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free; <sup>8</sup> the LORD  
 opens the eyes | of the blind.\*

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed  
 down; the LORD loves the | righteous.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD watches over the sojourners; he  
 upholds the widow and the | fatherless,\*  
 but the way of the wicked he brings  
 to | ruin.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD will reign for- | ever,\*  
 your God, O Zion,

to all generations. | Praise the LORD!

—Psalm 146:5–10

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:89–96*

**Old Testament Reading: Job 30:16–31**

[Job's Summary Defense]

<sup>16</sup>“And now my soul is poured out within me;  
days of affliction have taken hold of me.

<sup>17</sup>The night racks my bones,  
and the pain that gnaws me takes no rest.

<sup>18</sup>With great force my garment is disfigured;  
it binds me about like the collar  
of my tunic.

<sup>19</sup>God has cast me into the mire,  
and I have become like dust and ashes.

<sup>20</sup>I cry to you for help  
and you do not answer me;  
I stand, and you only look at me.

<sup>21</sup>You have turned cruel to me;  
with the might of your hand  
you persecute me.

<sup>22</sup>You lift me up on the wind;  
you make me ride on it,  
and you toss me about  
in the roar of the storm.

<sup>23</sup>For I know that you will bring me to death  
and to the house appointed for all living.

<sup>24</sup>“Yet does not one in a heap  
of ruins stretch out his hand,  
and in his disaster cry for help?

<sup>25</sup>Did not I weep for him whose day was hard?  
Was not my soul grieved for the needy?

<sup>26</sup>But when I hoped for good, evil came,  
and when I waited for light,  
darkness came.

<sup>27</sup>My inward parts are in turmoil  
and never still;  
days of affliction come to meet me.

<sup>28</sup>I go about darkened, but not by the sun;  
I stand up in the assembly  
and cry for help.

<sup>29</sup>I am a brother of jackals  
and a companion of ostriches.

<sup>30</sup>My skin turns black and falls from me,  
and my bones burn with heat.

<sup>31</sup>My lyre is turned to mourning,  
and my pipe to the voice  
of those who weep.”

**New Testament Reading: John 9:1–23**

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

<sup>1</sup>As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup>Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup>and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

<sup>8</sup>The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup>Some said, “It is he.” Others said, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” <sup>10</sup>So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” <sup>11</sup>He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed and received my sight.” <sup>12</sup>They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup>Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight.

And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.”<sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them.<sup>17</sup>So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

<sup>18</sup>The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight<sup>19</sup>and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”<sup>20</sup>His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind.<sup>21</sup>But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.”<sup>22</sup>(His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)<sup>23</sup>Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

## Writing

Job is excused though he was not troubled by past evil deeds [Job 2:3–10]. Therefore, troubles are not always punishments or signs of wrath. Indeed, terrified consciences should be taught that there are more important purposes for afflictions [2 Corinthians 12:9], so that they do not think God is rejecting them when they see nothing but God’s punishment and anger in troubles. The other more important purposes are to be considered, that is, that God is doing His strange work so that He

may be able to do His own work, as Isaiah 28 teaches in a long speech. When the disciples asked about the blind man who sinned, Christ replies that the cause of his blindness is not sin, but that “the works of God might be displayed in him” (John 9:2–3). In Jeremiah it is said, “If those who did not deserve to drink the cup must drink it . . .” (49:12). So the prophets, John the Baptist, and other saints were killed [Matthew 5:11]. Therefore, troubles are not always punishments for certain past deeds, but they are God’s works, intended for our benefit, and that God’s power might be made more apparent in our weakness.

So Paul says God’s strength “is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Because of God’s will, our bodies should be sacrifices, to declare our obedience, and not to pay for eternal death. God has another price for that: the death of His own Son.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
 XIIB (VI) 61–63 [158–160]

## Hymnody

Fill with the radiance of Your grace  
 The souls now lost in error’s maze;  
 Enlighten those whose inmost minds  
 Some dark delusion haunts and blinds.

—O Christ, Our True and Only Light  
 (LSB 839:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
 Your mercies are new every morning; and  
 though we deserve only punishment, You  
 receive us as Your children and provide for  
 all our needs of body and soul. Grant that  
 we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful  
 goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits,

and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L26)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord V

## 28 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

<sup>8</sup> Bless our God, O | peoples;\*  
let the sound of his | praise be heard,  
<sup>9</sup> who has kept our soul among the | living\*  
and has not let our | feet slip.  
<sup>10</sup> For you, O God, have | tested us;\*  
you have tried us as sil- | ver is tried.  
<sup>11</sup> You brought us in- | to the net;\*  
you laid a crushing burden | on our backs;  
<sup>12</sup> you let men ride o- | ver our heads;\*  
we went through fire and through water;  
yet you have brought us out  
to a place of a- | bundance.  
<sup>16</sup> Come and hear, all you who | fear God,\*  
and I will tell what he has done | for  
my soul.  
<sup>17</sup> I cried to him | with my mouth,\*  
and high praise was | on my tongue.  
<sup>18</sup> If I had cherished iniquity | in my heart,\*  
the Lord would not have | listened.  
<sup>19</sup> But truly God has | listened;\*  
he has attended to the voice | of  
my prayer.  
<sup>20</sup> Blessèd | be God,\*  
because he has not rejected my prayer or  
removed his steadfast | love from me!  
—Psalm 66:8–12, 16–20

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:169–176*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 31:1–12, 33–40

Job's Final Appeal

<sup>1</sup>“I have made a covenant with my eyes;  
how then could I gaze at a virgin?  
<sup>2</sup>What would be my portion from God above  
and my heritage from the Almighty  
on high?  
<sup>3</sup>Is not calamity for the unrighteous,  
and disaster for the workers of iniquity?  
<sup>4</sup>Does not he see my ways  
and number all my steps?  
<sup>5</sup>“If I have walked with falsehood  
and my foot has hastened to deceit;  
<sup>6</sup>(Let me be weighed in a just balance,  
and let God know my integrity!)  
<sup>7</sup>if my step has turned aside from the way  
and my heart has gone after my eyes,  
and if any spot has stuck to my hands,  
<sup>8</sup>then let me sow, and another eat,  
and let what grows for me be rooted out.  
<sup>9</sup>“If my heart has been enticed toward  
a woman,  
and I have lain in wait  
at my neighbor's door,  
<sup>10</sup>then let my wife grind for another,  
and let others bow down on her.  
<sup>11</sup>For that would be a heinous crime;  
that would be an iniquity  
to be punished by the judges;  
<sup>12</sup>for that would be a fire that consumes  
as far as Abaddon,  
and it would burn to the root  
all my increase. . . .  
<sup>33</sup>if I have concealed my transgressions  
as others do  
by hiding my iniquity in my bosom,

<sup>34</sup>because I stood in great fear  
of the multitude,  
and the contempt of families terrified me,  
so that I kept silence, and did not go out  
of doors—  
<sup>35</sup>Oh, that I had one to hear me!  
(Here is my signature!  
Let the Almighty answer me!)  
Oh, that I had the indictment written  
by my adversary!  
<sup>36</sup>Surely I would carry it on my shoulder;  
I would bind it on me as a crown;  
<sup>37</sup>I would give him an account of all my steps;  
like a prince I would approach him.  
<sup>38</sup>“If my land has cried out against me  
and its furrows have wept together,  
<sup>39</sup>if I have eaten its yield without payment  
and made its owners breathe their last,  
<sup>40</sup>let thorns grow instead of wheat,  
and foul weeds instead of barley.”  
The words of Job are ended.

### New Testament Reading: John 9:24–41

[Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind]

<sup>24</sup>So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.” <sup>25</sup>He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” <sup>26</sup>They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” <sup>27</sup>He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” <sup>28</sup>And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup>We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” <sup>30</sup>The man answered, “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know

where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup>We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. <sup>32</sup>Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. <sup>33</sup>If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” <sup>34</sup>They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

<sup>35</sup>Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” <sup>36</sup>He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” <sup>38</sup>He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” <sup>40</sup>Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” <sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”

### Writing

They are especially honored who for the sake of the truth and the confession of Christ suffer anything terrible and are insulted. Truly, he who loses his possessions for His sake, he is the one who will be found to be rich; he who hates his own life, he is the one who will be most loved; and in the same way, he who is insulted, he is the one who will be most honored. Surely this is shown in the case of the blind man. The Jews cast him out from the temple, and the Lord of the temple found him. He was separated from that pestilent company and met with the Fountain of salvation. He was dishonored

by those who dishonored Christ and was honored by the Lord of Sabaoth. Such are the prizes of truth. . . .

The Evangelist shows that Jesus came for the purpose of meeting that blind man. And having met him, observe how Jesus makes amends for losses he has suffered. He makes recompense by that which is the most prized of blessings. For He made Himself known to him who before knew Him not, and enrolled him into the company of His own disciples. . . .

Hear also Paul: “What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law” [Romans 9:30–31]. By saying, “For judgment I am come into this world,” He both made the man stronger respecting the faith, and aroused those who followed Him, for the Pharisees were following Him. And the “for judgment” He spoke with reference to a greater punishment, showing that, having given sentence against Him, they had received sentence against themselves; that having condemned Him as a sinner, they were themselves the persons condemned. In this passage, He speaks of two recoveries of sight and two blindnesses: one sensible, the other spiritual.

—Chrysostom

### Hymnody

O gently call those gone astray  
That they may find the saving way!  
Let ev'ry conscience sore oppressed  
In You find peace and heav'nly rest.

—O Christ, Our True and Only Light  
(LSB 839:3)

### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, as Your Son gave sight to the blind man, giving him eyes to see in Your Son the healer of the nations, give us sight to see the salvation prepared for us in Your Son, who opens our eyes in the breaking of the bread; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1151)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord VI

## 29 FEBRUARY

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD is my | shepherd;\*  
I | shall not want.
- <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green | pastures.\*  
He leads me beside still | waters.
- <sup>3</sup> He re- | stores my soul.\*  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his | name's sake.
- <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley  
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,  
for you are | with me;\*  
your rod and your staff, they | comfort me.
- <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the  
presence of my | enemies;\*  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup | overflows.
- <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days | of my life,\*  
and I shall dwell in the house  
of the LORD for- | ever.  
—Psalm 23

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 120*

## Old Testament Reading: Job 32:1–22

Elihu Rebukes Job's Three Friends

<sup>1</sup>So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

<sup>2</sup>Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, burned with anger. He burned with anger at Job because he justified himself rather than God. <sup>3</sup>He burned with anger also at Job's three friends because they had found no answer, although they had declared Job to be in the wrong. <sup>4</sup>Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were older than he. <sup>5</sup>And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, he burned with anger.

<sup>6</sup>And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said:

“I am young in years,  
and you are aged;  
therefore I was timid and afraid  
to declare my opinion to you.

<sup>7</sup>I said, ‘Let days speak,  
and many years teach wisdom.’

<sup>8</sup>But it is the spirit in man,  
the breath of the Almighty, that  
makes him understand.

<sup>9</sup>It is not the old who are wise,  
nor the aged who understand what  
is right.

<sup>10</sup>Therefore I say, ‘Listen to me;  
let me also declare my opinion.’

<sup>11</sup>“Behold, I waited for your words,  
I listened for your wise sayings,  
while you searched out what to say.

<sup>12</sup>I gave you my attention,  
and, behold, there was none among  
you who refuted Job  
or who answered his words.

<sup>13</sup>Beware lest you say,

‘We have found wisdom;  
God may vanquish him, not a man.’

<sup>14</sup>He has not directed his words against me,  
and I will not answer him  
with your speeches.

<sup>15</sup>“They are dismayed; they answer no more;  
they have not a word to say.

<sup>16</sup>And shall I wait,  
because they do not speak,  
because they stand there,  
and answer no more?

<sup>17</sup>I also will answer with my share;  
I also will declare my opinion.

<sup>18</sup>For I am full of words;  
the spirit within me constrains me.

<sup>19</sup>Behold, my belly is like wine  
that has no vent;  
like new wineskins ready to burst.

<sup>20</sup>I must speak, that I may find relief;  
I must open my lips and answer.

<sup>21</sup>I will not show partiality to any man  
or use flattery toward any person.

<sup>22</sup>For I do not know how to flatter,  
else my Maker would soon take  
me away.”

## New Testament Reading: John 10:1–21

I Am the Good Shepherd

<sup>1</sup>“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup>But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

<sup>5</sup>A stranger they will not follow, but they will

flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”<sup>6</sup> This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup>So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.<sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.<sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.<sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.<sup>12</sup> He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.<sup>13</sup> He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.<sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,<sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.<sup>16</sup> And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.<sup>17</sup> For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.<sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

<sup>19</sup>There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.<sup>20</sup> Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?”<sup>21</sup> Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

## Writing

I really would like to see a truly Christian council, so that many people and issues might be helped. Not that we need help. Our churches are now, through God’s grace, enlightened and equipped with the pure Word and right use of the Sacraments, with knowledge of the various callings and right works. So, on our part, we ask for no council. On such points, we have nothing better to hope or expect from a council. But we see throughout the bishops’ jurisdictions so many parishes vacant and desolate that it breaks our heart. Still, neither the bishops nor the Church officials care how the poor people live or die. Christ has died for them, and yet they are not allowed to hear Him speak as the true Shepherd with His sheep [John 10:11–18]. This makes me shudder and fear that someday He might send a council of angels upon Germany who will utterly destroy us like Sodom and Gomorrah [Genesis 19:1–25] for wickedly mocking Him with the pretext of a council.

—Smalcald Articles Preface 10–11

Even though the adversaries claim the name of Church for themselves, we know that Christ’s Church is with those who teach Christ’s Gospel, not with those who defend wicked opinions contrary to the Gospel. As the Lord says, “My sheep hear My voice” (John 10:27). And Augustine says:

The question is, “Where is the Church?” What, therefore, are we to do? Are we to seek it in our own words or in the words of its Head, our Lord Jesus Christ? I think that we ought to seek it in the words of Him who is Truth, and who knows His own body best.

—Apology of the Augsburg Confession  
V (III) 279 [400]

## Hymnody

We are Yours; in love befriend us,  
 Be the guardian of our way;  
 Keep Your flock, from sin defend us,  
 Seek us when we go astray.  
 Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
 Hear us children when we pray.  
 Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
 Hear us children when we pray.  
 —Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us  
 (LSB 711:2)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, merciful Father, since  
 You have wakened from death the Shepherd  
 of Your sheep, grant us Your Holy Spirit that  
 when we hear the voice of our Shepherd we  
 may know Him who calls us each by name  
 and follow where He leads; through the same  
 Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives  
 and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one  
 God, now and forever. (L43)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord VII 1–20

## 1 MARCH

## Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> God has taken his place  
 in the divine | council;\*  
 in the midst of the gods  
 he holds | judgment:  
<sup>2</sup> “How long will you judge un- | justly\*  
 and show partiality to the | wicked?  
<sup>3</sup> Give justice to the weak and the |  
 fatherless;\*

maintain the right of the afflicted  
 and the | destitute.

<sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and the | needy;\*  
 deliver them from the hand  
 of the | wicked.”

<sup>5</sup> They have neither knowledge nor  
 understanding, they walk about  
 in | darkness;\*  
 all the foundations of the earth  
 are | shaken.

<sup>6</sup> I said, | “You are gods,\*  
 sons of the Most High, | all of you;

<sup>7</sup> nevertheless, like men | you shall die,\*  
 and fall like | any prince.”

<sup>8</sup> Arise, O God, | judge the earth;\*  
 for you shall inherit all the | nations!  
 —Psalm 82

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 140*

## Old Testament Reading: Job 33:1–18

Elihu Rebukes Job

<sup>1</sup> “But now, hear my speech, O Job,  
 and listen to all my words.

<sup>2</sup> Behold, I open my mouth;  
 the tongue in my mouth speaks.

<sup>3</sup> My words declare the uprightness  
 of my heart,  
 and what my lips know  
 they speak sincerely.

<sup>4</sup> The Spirit of God has made me,  
 and the breath of the Almighty  
 gives me life.

<sup>5</sup> Answer me, if you can;  
 set your words in order before me;  
 take your stand.

<sup>6</sup> Behold, I am toward God as you are;  
 I too was pinched off from a piece of clay.

<sup>7</sup> Behold, no fear of me need terrify you;  
 my pressure will not be heavy upon you.

<sup>8</sup> “Surely you have spoken in my ears,

and I have heard the sound of your words.  
<sup>9</sup>You say, 'I am pure, without transgression;  
 I am clean, and there is no iniquity in me.  
<sup>10</sup>Behold, he finds occasions against me,  
 he counts me as his enemy,  
<sup>11</sup>he puts my feet in the stocks  
 and watches all my paths.'  
<sup>12</sup>"Behold, in this you are not right.  
 I will answer you,  
 for God is greater than man.  
<sup>13</sup>Why do you contend against him,  
 saying, 'He will answer none  
 of man's words?'  
<sup>14</sup>For God speaks in one way,  
 and in two, though man does not  
 perceive it.  
<sup>15</sup>In a dream, in a vision of the night,  
 when deep sleep falls on men,  
 while they slumber on their beds,  
<sup>16</sup>then he opens the ears of men  
 and terrifies them with warnings,  
<sup>17</sup>that he may turn man aside from his deed  
 and conceal pride from a man;  
<sup>18</sup>he keeps back his soul from the pit,  
 his life from perishing by the sword."

### New Testament Reading: John 10:22–42

I and the Father Are One

<sup>22</sup>At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter,  
<sup>23</sup>and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. <sup>24</sup>So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." <sup>25</sup>Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, <sup>26</sup>but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and

they follow me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup>I and the Father are one."

<sup>31</sup>The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. <sup>32</sup>Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" <sup>33</sup>The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God." <sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? <sup>35</sup>If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken—<sup>36</sup>do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? <sup>37</sup>If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; <sup>38</sup>but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." <sup>39</sup>Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.

<sup>40</sup>He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. <sup>41</sup>And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." <sup>42</sup>And many believed in him there.

### Writing

The sages, it is often said, can see no answer to the riddle of religion. But the trouble with our sages is not that they

cannot see the answer; it is that they cannot even see the riddle. They are like children so stupid as to notice nothing paradoxical in the playful assertion that a door is not a door. The modern latitudinarians speak, for instance, about authority in religion not only as if there were no reason in it, but as if there had never been any reason for it. Apart from seeing its philosophical basis, they cannot even see its historical cause. Religious authority has often, doubtless, been oppressive or unreasonable; just as every legal system (and especially our present one) has been callous and full of a cruel apathy. It is rational to attack the police; nay, it is glorious. But the modern critics of religious authority are like men who should attack the police without ever having heard of burglars. For there is a great and possible peril to the human mind: a peril as practical as burglary. Against it religious authority was reared, rightly or wrongly, as a barrier. And against it something certainly must be reared as a barrier, if our race is to avoid ruin.

—Gilbert K. Chesterton

### Hymnody

Thine forever! Shepherd, keep  
 These Thy frail and trembling sheep;  
 Safe alone beneath Thy care,  
 Let us all Thy goodness share.

—Thine Forever, God of Love  
 (LSB 687:4)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, You fulfilled Your promise by sending the gift of the Holy Spirit to unite disciples of all nations in the cross and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ. By the preaching of the

Gospel spread this gift to the ends of the earth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L49)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord VII 21–42

## 2 MARCH

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> I love the LORD, because | he has heard\*  
 my voice and my pleas for | mercy.
  - <sup>2</sup> Because he inclined his | ear to me,\*  
 therefore I will call on him  
 as long | as I live.
  - <sup>3</sup> The snares of death encompassed me; the  
 pangs of Sheol laid | hold on me;\*  
 I suffered distress and | anguish.
  - <sup>4</sup> Then I called on the name | of the LORD:\*  
 “O LORD, I pray, deliv- | er my soul!”
  - <sup>5</sup> Gracious is the LORD, and | righteous;\*  
 our God is | merciful.
  - <sup>6</sup> The LORD preserves the | simple;\*  
 when I was brought low, he | saved me.
  - <sup>7</sup> Return, O my soul, | to your rest;\*  
 for the LORD has dealt  
 bountifully | with you.
  - <sup>8</sup> For you have delivered my | soul from death,\*  
 my eyes from tears,  
 my feet from | stumbling;
  - <sup>9</sup> I will walk be- | fore the LORD\*  
 in the land of the | living.
- Psalm 116:1–9

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:49–56*

**Old Testament Reading: Job 33:19–34:9**

[Elihu Rebukes Job]

<sup>19</sup>“Man is also rebuked  
with pain on his bed  
and with continual strife in his bones,  
<sup>20</sup>so that his life loathes bread,  
and his appetite the choicest food.  
<sup>21</sup>His flesh is so wasted away that it cannot  
be seen,  
and his bones that were not seen  
stick out.  
<sup>22</sup>His soul draws near the pit,  
and his life to those who bring death.  
<sup>23</sup>If there be for him an angel,  
a mediator, one of the thousand,  
to declare to man what is right  
for him,  
<sup>24</sup>and he is merciful to him, and says,  
‘Deliver him from going down  
into the pit;  
I have found a ransom;  
<sup>25</sup>let his flesh become fresh with youth;  
let him return to the days  
of his youthful vigor’;  
<sup>26</sup>then man prays to God,  
and he accepts him;  
he sees his face with a shout of joy,  
and he restores to man his righteousness.  
<sup>27</sup>He sings before men and says:  
‘I sinned and perverted what was right,  
and it was not repaid to me.  
<sup>28</sup>He has redeemed my soul  
from going down into the pit,  
and my life shall look upon the light.’  
<sup>29</sup>“Behold, God does all these things,  
twice, three times, with a man,  
<sup>30</sup>to bring back his soul from the pit,  
that he may be lighted  
with the light of life.

<sup>31</sup>Pay attention, O Job, listen to me;  
be silent, and I will speak.  
<sup>32</sup>If you have any words, answer me;  
speak, for I desire to justify you.  
<sup>33</sup>If not, listen to me;  
be silent, and I will teach  
you wisdom.”

Elihu Asserts God’s Justice

<sup>34:1</sup>Then Elihu answered and said:

<sup>2</sup>“Hear my words, you wise men,  
and give ear to me, you who know;  
<sup>3</sup>for the ear tests words  
as the palate tastes food.  
<sup>4</sup>Let us choose what is right;  
let us know among ourselves  
what is good.  
<sup>5</sup>For Job has said, ‘I am in the right,  
and God has taken away my right;  
<sup>6</sup>in spite of my right I am counted a liar;  
my wound is incurable,  
though I am without transgression.’  
<sup>7</sup>What man is like Job,  
who drinks up scoffing like water,  
<sup>8</sup>who travels in company with evildoers  
and walks with wicked men?  
<sup>9</sup>For he has said, ‘It profits a man nothing  
that he should take delight in God.’”

**New Testament Reading: John 11:1–16**

The Death of Lazarus

<sup>1</sup>Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup>It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup>So the sisters sent to him, saying, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” <sup>4</sup>But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

<sup>5</sup>Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup>So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. <sup>7</sup>Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” <sup>8</sup>The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?” <sup>9</sup>Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. <sup>10</sup>But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” <sup>11</sup>After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.” <sup>12</sup>The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” <sup>13</sup>Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup>Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, <sup>15</sup>and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” <sup>16</sup>So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

### Writing

St. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians [1 Thess. 4:13–18] not to sorrow over the dead as others who have no hope, but to comfort each other with God’s Word as having a certain hope of life and of the resurrection of the dead.

It is little wonder if those are sad who have no hope. Nor can they be blamed for it. Since they are beyond the pale of faith in Christ, they must either cherish this temporal life as the only thing worthwhile and hate to lose it, or they must expect that after this life they will receive eternal death

and the wrath of God in hell and must fear to go there.

But we Christians, who have been redeemed from all this by the dear blood of the Son of God, should by faith train and accustom ourselves to despise death and to regard it as a deep, strong, and sweet sleep, to regard the coffin as nothing but paradise and the bosom of our Lord Christ, and the grave as nothing but a soft couch or sofa, which it really is in the sight of God; for he says, John 11[:11], “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep,” and Matthew 9[:24], “The girl is not dead but sleeping.”

Thus, too, St. Paul in I Corinthians 15[:42–44] bans from his sight every ugly aspect of death in our mortal body and brings to the fore a wholly delightful and joyous picture of life when he says: “What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. . . . It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

—Martin Luther

### Hymnody

I am content! At length I shall be free,  
Awakened from the dead,  
Arising glorious evermore to be  
With You, my living head.  
The chains that hold my body, sever;  
Then shall my soul rejoice forever.

I am content!

I am content!

—I Am Content! My Jesus Ever Lives  
(LSB 468:4)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, Your Son shines with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as

we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1152)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord VIII 1–9

## 3 MARCH

### Psalmody

- <sup>12</sup> What shall I render | to the LORD\*  
for all his bene- | fits to me?
- <sup>13</sup> I will lift up the cup of sal- | vation\*  
and call on the name | of the LORD,
- <sup>14</sup> I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
in the presence of all his | people.
- <sup>15</sup> Precious in the sight | of the LORD\*  
is the death | of his saints.
- <sup>16</sup> O LORD, I am your | servant;\*  
I am your servant, the son of your  
maidservant. You have | loosed my  
bonds.
- <sup>17</sup> I will offer to you the sacrifice  
of thanks- | giving\*  
and call on the name | of the LORD.
- <sup>18</sup> I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
in the presence of all his | people,
- <sup>19</sup> in the courts of the house | of the LORD,\*  
in your midst, O Jerusalem. | Praise  
the LORD!

—Psalm 116:12–19

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 138*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 34:10–33

[Elihu Asserts God's Justice]

<sup>10</sup>“Therefore, hear me, you men  
of understanding:

far be it from God that he  
should do wickedness,  
and from the Almighty  
that he should do wrong.

<sup>11</sup>For according to the work of a man  
he will repay him,  
and according to his ways  
he will make it befall him.

<sup>12</sup>Of a truth, God will not do wickedly,  
and the Almighty will not pervert  
justice.

<sup>13</sup>Who gave him charge over the earth,  
and who laid on him the whole world?

<sup>14</sup>If he should set his heart to it  
and gather to himself his spirit  
and his breath,

<sup>15</sup>all flesh would perish together,  
and man would return to dust.

<sup>16</sup>“If you have understanding, hear this;  
listen to what I say.

<sup>17</sup>Shall one who hates justice govern?  
Will you condemn him  
who is righteous and mighty,

<sup>18</sup>who says to a king, ‘Worthless one,’  
and to nobles, ‘Wicked man,’

<sup>19</sup>who shows no partiality to princes,  
nor regards the rich more than the poor,  
for they are all the work of his hands?

<sup>20</sup>In a moment they die;  
at midnight the people are shaken  
and pass away,  
and the mighty are taken away  
by no human hand.

<sup>21</sup>“For his eyes are on the ways of a man,  
and he sees all his steps.

<sup>22</sup>There is no gloom or deep darkness  
where evildoers may hide themselves.

<sup>23</sup>For God has no need to consider  
a man further,  
that he should go before God  
in judgment.

<sup>24</sup>He shatters the mighty without investigation  
and sets others in their place.

<sup>25</sup>Thus, knowing their works,  
he overturns them in the night,  
and they are crushed.

<sup>26</sup>He strikes them for their wickedness  
in a place for all to see,  
<sup>27</sup>because they turned aside  
from following him  
and had no regard for any of his ways,  
<sup>28</sup>so that they caused the cry of the poor  
to come to him,  
and he heard the cry of the afflicted—

<sup>29</sup>When he is quiet, who can condemn?  
When he hides his face,  
who can behold him,  
whether it be a nation or a man?—

<sup>30</sup>that a godless man should not reign,  
that he should not ensnare the people.

<sup>31</sup>“For has anyone said to God,  
‘I have borne punishment;  
I will not offend any more;  
<sup>32</sup>teach me what I do not see;  
if I have done iniquity,  
I will do it no more?’

<sup>33</sup>Will he then make repayment to suit you,  
because you reject it?  
For you must choose, and not I;  
therefore declare what you know.”

**New Testament Reading: John 11:17–37**

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

<sup>17</sup>Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup>Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, <sup>19</sup>and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them

concerning their brother. <sup>20</sup>So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. <sup>21</sup>Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” <sup>24</sup>Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup>and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” <sup>27</sup>She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

Jesus Weeps

<sup>28</sup>When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” <sup>29</sup>And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup>Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup>When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup>Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. <sup>34</sup>And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” <sup>35</sup>Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup>So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” <sup>37</sup>But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

## Writing

John adds this point also: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). Therefore, this person of the Deity in whom was the life and light of men, even before the Fall, was sent for the work of our redemption. For when we were alienated from the life of God through the Fall (Eph. 4:18), and when death through sin had come upon all men (Rom. 5:12), we could not be rescued from death and restored to life except through Him in whom was life, who was the very Word of life and life itself (1 John 1:1–2); and this has made sure our faith that truly and powerfully we are freed from death through Christ and led to eternal life, because in Him was life, for He is life itself. Therefore, he who believes in Him, though he were dead, shall live (John 11:25). And he who has the Son has eternal life; for life itself is in the Son (1 John 5:11). These points, when piously considered, are full of comfort.

—Martin Chemnitz

## Hymnody

Jesus has come as the mighty Redeemer.  
See now the threatening strong one disarmed!  
Jesus breaks down all the walls of death’s  
fortress,  
Brings forth the pris’ners triumphant,  
unharméd.

Satan, you wicked one, own now your master!  
Jesus has come! He, the mighty Redeemer!

—Jesus Has Come and Brings Pleasure  
(LSB 533:3)

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by Your great goodness  
mercifully look upon Your people that we

may be governed and preserved evermore in  
body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your  
Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with  
You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
forever. (L27)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula  
of Concord VIII 10–18

## 4 MARCH

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup> Why do the | nations rage\*  
and the peoples | plot in vain?  
<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel to- | gether,\*  
against the LORD and against his  
anointed, | saying,  
<sup>3</sup> “Let us burst their | bonds apart\*  
and cast away their | cords from us.”  
<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the | heavens laughs;\*  
the Lord holds them in de- | rision.  
<sup>5</sup> Then he will speak to them | in his wrath,\*  
and terrify them in his fury, | saying,  
<sup>6</sup> “As for me, I have | set my King\*  
on Zion, my | holy hill.”  
<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O | kings, be wise,\*  
be warned, O rulers | of the earth.  
<sup>11</sup> Serve the | LORD with fear,\*  
and rejoice with | trembling.  
<sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,  
and you perish in the way,  
for his wrath is quickly | kindled.\*  
Blessèd are all who take ref- | uge in him.  
—Psalm 2:1–6, 10–12

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 83*

## Old Testament Reading: Job 36:1–21

Elihu Extols God's Greatness

<sup>1</sup>And Elihu continued, and said:

<sup>2</sup>“Bear with me a little, and I will show you,  
for I have yet something to say on  
God's behalf.

<sup>3</sup>I will get my knowledge from afar  
and ascribe righteousness  
to my Maker.

<sup>4</sup>For truly my words are not false;  
one who is perfect in knowledge  
is with you.

<sup>5</sup>“Behold, God is mighty,  
and does not despise any;  
he is mighty in strength  
of understanding.

<sup>6</sup>He does not keep the wicked alive,  
but gives the afflicted their right.

<sup>7</sup>He does not withdraw his eyes  
from the righteous,  
but with kings on the throne  
he sets them forever,  
and they are exalted.

<sup>8</sup>And if they are bound in chains  
and caught in the cords of affliction,

<sup>9</sup>then he declares to them their work  
and their transgressions,  
that they are behaving arrogantly.

<sup>10</sup>He opens their ears to instruction  
and commands that they return  
from iniquity.

<sup>11</sup>If they listen and serve him,  
they complete their days  
in prosperity,  
and their years in pleasantness.

<sup>12</sup>But if they do not listen,  
they perish by the sword  
and die without knowledge.

<sup>13</sup>“The godless in heart cherish anger;

they do not cry for help  
when he binds them.

<sup>14</sup>They die in youth,  
and their life ends  
among the cult prostitutes.

<sup>15</sup>He delivers the afflicted  
by their affliction  
and opens their ear by adversity.

<sup>16</sup>He also allured you out of distress  
into a broad place where there  
was no cramping,  
and what was set on your table  
was full of fatness.

<sup>17</sup>“But you are full of the judgment  
on the wicked;  
judgment and justice seize you.

<sup>18</sup>Beware lest wrath entice you  
into scoffing,  
and let not the greatness of the  
ransom turn you aside.

<sup>19</sup>Will your cry for help avail to keep  
you from distress,  
or all the force of your strength?

<sup>20</sup>Do not long for the night,  
when peoples vanish in their place.

<sup>21</sup>Take care; do not turn to iniquity,  
for this you have chosen  
rather than affliction.”

## New Testament Reading: John 11:38–57

Jesus Raises Lazarus

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, deeply moved again,  
came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone  
lay against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, “Take away the  
stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man,  
said to him, “Lord, by this time there will  
be an odor, for he has been dead four days.”

<sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that  
if you believed you would see the glory of  
God?” <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And  
Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I

thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” <sup>43</sup>When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” <sup>44</sup>The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

#### The Plot to Kill Jesus

<sup>45</sup>Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, <sup>46</sup>but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. <sup>47</sup>So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. <sup>48</sup>If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” <sup>49</sup>But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup>Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” <sup>51</sup>He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup>and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. <sup>53</sup>So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

<sup>54</sup>Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

<sup>55</sup>Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country

to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup>They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?” <sup>57</sup>Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

## Writing

### The Second Article

And [I believe] 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.

*What does this mean?* I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

The Third Article

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.

*What does this mean?* I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

—Martin Luther

**Hymnody**

Sing with all the saints in glory,  
Sing the resurrection song!  
Death and sorrow, earth's dark story,  
To the former days belong.  
All around the clouds are breaking;  
Soon the storms of time shall cease;  
In God's likeness we awaken,  
Knowing everlasting peace.

—Sing with All the Saints in Glory  
(LSB 671:1)

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord Jesus Christ, You raised Lazarus from the dead, giving us a glimpse of Your glorious resurrection, where You showed us what we will someday be and what we

already are now through the waters of Holy Baptism. Even in the darkest hours of our lives, let the light of Your resurrection shine with the brightness of Your glory; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1153)

**Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord**

Epitome of the Formula of Concord VIII 19–39

**5 MARCH**

**Psalmody**

<sup>22</sup> The stone that the builders re- | jected\*  
has become the | cornerstone.

<sup>23</sup> This is the LORD's | doing;\*  
it is marvelous | in our eyes.

<sup>24</sup> This is the day that the | LORD has made;\*  
let us rejoice and be | glad in it.

<sup>25</sup> Save us, we pray, | O LORD!\*  
O LORD, we pray, give | us success!

<sup>26</sup> Blessèd is he who comes  
in the name | of the LORD!\*  
We bless you from the house | of  
the LORD.

<sup>27</sup> The LORD is God, and he has made  
his light to shine up- | on us.\*  
Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,  
up to the horns of the | altar!

<sup>28</sup> You are my God, and I will give | thanks  
to you;\*  
you are my God; I will ex- | tol you.

<sup>29</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD, for | he  
is good;\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!  
—Psalm 118:22–29

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:41–48*

**Old Testament Reading: Job 37:1–24**

Elihu Proclaims God's Majesty

- <sup>1</sup>“At this also my heart trembles  
and leaps out of its place.
- <sup>2</sup>Keep listening to the thunder of his voice  
and the rumbling that comes  
from his mouth.
- <sup>3</sup>Under the whole heaven he lets it go,  
and his lightning to the corners  
of the earth.
- <sup>4</sup>After it his voice roars;  
he thunders with his majestic voice,  
and he does not restrain the lightnings  
when his voice is heard.
- <sup>5</sup>God thunders wondrously with his voice;  
he does great things  
that we cannot comprehend.
- <sup>6</sup>For to the snow he says, ‘Fall on the earth,’  
likewise to the downpour,  
his mighty downpour.
- <sup>7</sup>He seals up the hand of every man,  
that all men whom he made may know it.
- <sup>8</sup>Then the beasts go into their lairs,  
and remain in their dens.
- <sup>9</sup>From its chamber comes the whirlwind,  
and cold from the scattering winds.
- <sup>10</sup>By the breath of God ice is given,  
and the broad waters are frozen fast.
- <sup>11</sup>He loads the thick cloud with moisture;  
the clouds scatter his lightning.
- <sup>12</sup>They turn around and around  
by his guidance,  
to accomplish all that he commands them  
on the face of the habitable world.
- <sup>13</sup>Whether for correction or for his land  
or for love, he causes it to happen.
- <sup>14</sup>“Hear this, O Job;  
stop and consider the wondrous works  
of God.

- <sup>15</sup>Do you know how God lays his command  
upon them  
and causes the lightning  
of his cloud to shine?
- <sup>16</sup>Do you know the balancings of the clouds,  
the wondrous works of him  
who is perfect in knowledge,  
<sup>17</sup>you whose garments are hot  
when the earth is still because  
of the south wind?
- <sup>18</sup>Can you, like him, spread out the skies,  
hard as a cast metal mirror?
- <sup>19</sup>Teach us what we shall say to him;  
we cannot draw up our case because  
of darkness.
- <sup>20</sup>Shall it be told him that I would speak?  
Did a man ever wish that he would be  
swallowed up?
- <sup>21</sup>“And now no one looks on the light  
when it is bright in the skies,  
when the wind has passed  
and cleared them.
- <sup>22</sup>Out of the north comes golden splendor;  
God is clothed with awesome majesty.
- <sup>23</sup>The Almighty—we cannot find him;  
he is great in power;  
justice and abundant righteousness  
he will not violate.
- <sup>24</sup>Therefore men fear him;  
he does not regard any who  
are wise in their own conceit.”

**New Testament Reading: John 12:1–19**

Mary Anoints Jesus at Bethany

- <sup>1</sup>Six days before the Passover, Jesus  
therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus  
was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.  
<sup>2</sup>So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha  
served, and Lazarus was one of those  
reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup>Mary therefore  
took a pound of expensive ointment made

from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>“Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” <sup>6</sup>He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

The Plot to Kill Lazarus

<sup>9</sup>When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup>So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, <sup>11</sup>because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

The Triumphal Entry

<sup>12</sup>The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” <sup>14</sup>And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

<sup>15</sup>“Fear not, daughter of Zion;  
 behold, your king is coming,  
 sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

<sup>16</sup>His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things

had been written about him and had been done to him. <sup>17</sup>The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. <sup>18</sup>The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. <sup>19</sup>So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”

**Writing**

There are certain sacraments [rites] in the Church and, although salvation does not depend on them principally, yet salvation is increased from them according as devotion is exercised. Although all these cannot be enumerated at present, nevertheless we should not omit certain ones as examples of all. So of these sacraments some consist of such things as the water of aspersion, the reception of ashes, the blessing of branches and of candles, and other such things. Now others consist of deeds such as the sign of the cross, the blowing of exorcization, the spreading of the hands, the bending of the knees, and other acts of this kind. Others consist of words, like the invocation of the Trinity and whatever else is done in this manner. Now all these things are sanctified by the word of God, whether they are sanctified through the utterance of words by invoking divine power or receive the effect of sanctification through the same divine power by the exhibiting of faith alone. For where there is true faith, the word of God cannot be lacking, since the word itself is conceived by faith and operates through faith.

Ecclesiastical custom also has it that, on the Sunday which is next before the Paschal feast, the branches of palms and the foliage of trees be blessed and distributed to the

people, to carry as those did, who while singing and praising with branches of palms and flourishing foliage of trees met the Lord Jesus on the same days as He ascended to Jerusalem. Thus not only is it proposed that this must be done by us corporeally as they did it corporeally, but rather this is signified, that either in that or in this corporeal deed there must be spiritual imitation. For the palm is the sign of victory but the flourishing branches signify good works. So then we meet Christ in an act of praise with branches of palms and foliage, when we praise Him with good works and with action worthy of graces as the triumpher over death.

—Hugh of Saint Victor

### Hymnody

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die.  
O Christ, Thy triumphs now begin  
O'er captive death and conquered sin.

—Ride On, Ride On in Majesty  
(LSB 441:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, grant that in the midst of our failures and weaknesses we may be restored through the passion and intercession of Your only-begotten Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L29)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord IX–X

## 6 MARCH

### Psalmody

- <sup>1</sup>The LORD says to my Lord:  
“Sit at my | right hand,\*  
until I make your enemies  
your | footstool.”
- <sup>2</sup>The LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty | scepter.\*  
Rule in the midst of your | enemies!
- <sup>3</sup>Your people will offer themselves freely  
on the day of your power,  
in holy | garments;\*  
from the womb of the morning,  
the dew of your youth | will be yours.
- <sup>4</sup>The LORD has sworn  
and will not | change his mind,\*  
“You are a priest forever after the order  
of Mel- | chizedek.”
- <sup>5</sup>The Lord is at your | right hand,\*  
he will shatter kings  
on the day | of his wrath.
- <sup>6</sup>He will execute judgment among the  
nations, filling them with | corpses;\*  
he will shatter chiefs over the | wide earth.
- <sup>7</sup>He will drink from the brook | by the way,\*  
therefore he will lift | up his head.
- Psalm 110

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 119:17–24*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 38:1–18

The LORD Answers Job

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD answered Job  
out of the whirlwind and said:

<sup>2</sup>“Who is this that darkens counsel by  
words without knowledge?

<sup>3</sup>Dress for action like a man;  
I will question you,  
and you make it known to me.

<sup>4</sup>“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?  
 Tell me, if you have understanding.  
<sup>5</sup>Who determined its measurements—surely you know!  
 Or who stretched the line upon it?  
<sup>6</sup>On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone,  
<sup>7</sup>when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?  
<sup>8</sup>“Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb,  
<sup>9</sup>when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band,  
<sup>10</sup>and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors,  
<sup>11</sup>and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed’?  
<sup>12</sup>“Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place,  
<sup>13</sup>that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?  
<sup>14</sup>It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment.  
<sup>15</sup>From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken.  
<sup>16</sup>“Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep?  
<sup>17</sup>Have the gates of death been revealed to you,

or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?

<sup>18</sup>Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth?

Declare, if you know all this.”

*Additional Reading: Job 38:19–39:30*

### **New Testament Reading: John 12:20–36a**

Some Greeks Seek Jesus

<sup>20</sup>Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.  
<sup>21</sup>So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up

<sup>27</sup>“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup>The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

<sup>33</sup>He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. <sup>34</sup>So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” <sup>35</sup>So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup>While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

## Writing

[Holy Communion] is a promise of the forgiveness of sins made to us by God, and such a promise as has been confirmed by the death of the Son of God. For the only difference between a promise and a testament is that the testament involves the death of the one who makes it. A testator is a promiser who is about to die, while a promiser (if I may put it thus) is a testator who is not about to die. This testament of Christ is foreshadowed in all the promises of God from the beginning of the world; indeed, whatever value those ancient promises possessed was altogether derived from this new promise that was to come in Christ. Hence the words “compact,” “covenant,” and “testament of the Lord” occur so frequently in the Scriptures. These words signified that God would one day die. “For where there is a testament, the death of the testator must of necessity occur” (Heb. 9[16]). Now God made a testament; therefore, it was necessary that he should die. But God could not die unless he became man. Thus the incarnation and the death of Christ are both comprehended most concisely in this one word, “testament.” . . .

[Access to God’s promise is] gained, not with any works, or powers, or merits of one’s own, but by faith alone. For where there is the Word of the promising God, there must necessarily be the faith of the accepting man. It is plain therefore, that the beginning of our salvation is a faith which clings to the Word of the promising God, who, without any effort on our part, in free and unmerited mercy takes the initiative and offers us the word of his promise.

—Martin Luther

## Hymnody

We praise You, Lord, for Philip,  
Blest guide to Greek and Jew,  
And for young James the faithful,  
Who heard and followed You.  
O grant us grace to know You,  
The way, the truth, the life,  
To wrestle with temptation,  
To triumph in the strife.

—By All Your Saints in Warfare  
(*LSB* 518:16)

## Prayer of the Day

Merciful God, Your Son, Jesus Christ, was lifted high upon the cross that He might bear the sins of the world and draw all people to Himself. Grant that we who glory in His death for our redemption may faithfully heed His call to bear the cross and follow Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (F27)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord XI 1–15

7 MARCH

*Perpetua and Felicitas, Martyrs*

**Psalmody**

<sup>1</sup>I lift up my eyes | to the hills.\*  
 From where does my | help come?  
<sup>2</sup>My help comes | from the LORD,\*  
 who made | heaven and earth.  
<sup>3</sup>He will not let your | foot be moved;\*  
 he who keeps you will not | slumber.  
<sup>4</sup>Behold, he who keeps | Israel\*  
 will neither slum- | ber nor sleep.  
<sup>5</sup>The LORD is your | keeper;\*  
 the LORD is your shade  
 on your | right hand.  
<sup>6</sup>The sun shall not strike | you by day,\*  
 nor the | moon by night.  
<sup>7</sup>The LORD will keep you from all | evil;\*  
 he will | keep your life.  
<sup>8</sup>The LORD will keep your going out  
 and your | coming in\*  
 from this time forth and for- | evermore.  
 —Psalm 121

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 26*

**Old Testament Reading: Job 40:1–24**

<sup>1</sup>And the LORD said to Job:  
<sup>2</sup>“Shall a faultfinder contend  
 with the Almighty?  
 He who argues with God,  
 let him answer it.”  
 Job Promises Silence  
<sup>3</sup>Then Job answered the LORD and said:  
<sup>4</sup>“Behold, I am of small account;  
 what shall I answer you?  
 I lay my hand on my mouth.

<sup>5</sup>I have spoken once,  
 and I will not answer;  
 twice, but I will proceed no further.”

The LORD Challenges Job

<sup>6</sup>Then the LORD answered Job out  
 of the whirlwind and said:  
<sup>7</sup>“Dress for action like a man;  
 I will question you,  
 and you make it known to me.  
<sup>8</sup>Will you even put me in the wrong?  
 Will you condemn me  
 that you may be in the right?  
<sup>9</sup>Have you an arm like God,  
 and can you thunder  
 with a voice like his?  
<sup>10</sup>“Adorn yourself with majesty  
 and dignity;  
 clothe yourself with glory  
 and splendor.  
<sup>11</sup>Pour out the overflowings  
 of your anger,  
 and look on everyone who is proud  
 and abase him.  
<sup>12</sup>Look on everyone who is proud  
 and bring him low  
 and tread down the wicked  
 where they stand.  
<sup>13</sup>Hide them all in the dust together;  
 bind their faces in the world below.  
<sup>14</sup>Then will I also acknowledge to you  
 that your own right hand  
 can save you.  
<sup>15</sup>“Behold, Behemoth,  
 which I made as I made you;  
 he eats grass like an ox.  
<sup>16</sup>Behold, his strength in his loins,  
 and his power in the muscles  
 of his belly.  
<sup>17</sup>He makes his tail stiff like a cedar;

the sinews of his thighs  
are knit together.

<sup>18</sup>His bones are tubes of bronze,  
his limbs like bars of iron.

<sup>19</sup>“He is the first of the works of God;  
let him who made him  
bring near his sword!

<sup>20</sup>For the mountains yield food for him  
where all the wild beasts play.

<sup>21</sup>Under the lotus plants he lies,  
in the shelter of the reeds  
and in the marsh.

<sup>22</sup>For his shade the lotus trees cover him;  
the willows of the brook  
surround him.

<sup>23</sup>Behold, if the river is turbulent  
he is not frightened;  
he is confident though Jordan rushes  
against his mouth.

<sup>24</sup>Can one take him by his eyes,  
or pierce his nose with a snare?”

### New Testament Reading: John 12:36b–50

#### The Unbelief of the People

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

<sup>37</sup>Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, <sup>38</sup>so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed  
what he heard from us,  
and to whom has the arm  
of the Lord been revealed?”

<sup>39</sup>Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

<sup>40</sup>“He has blinded their eyes  
and hardened their heart,  
lest they see with their eyes,

and understand with their heart,  
and turn,  
and I would heal them.”

<sup>41</sup>Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. <sup>42</sup>Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup>for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

#### Jesus Came to Save the World

<sup>44</sup>And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. <sup>45</sup>And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. <sup>46</sup>I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. <sup>47</sup>If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. <sup>48</sup>The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. <sup>49</sup>For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. <sup>50</sup>And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

### Writing

To know how we obtain our justification, it is expedient to consider, first, how miscreant and sinful we, who are Adam’s kindred, all are; and in contrast, what mercifulness is in God, who pardons all the offenses of all faithful and penitent sinners for Christ’s sake. No person who has ever heard of the fall of Adam, which infected all his posterity,

is lightly ignorant of these two things. Nor should anyone be casually ignorant of the inexplicable mercy of our heavenly Father, who sent His only-begotten Son to suffer His most grievous Passion for us and shed His most precious blood as the price of our re-demption. But it is greatly to be wished and desired that as all Christian people know this, so also that every person might acknowledge and undoubtedly believe it to be true and verified. Thus he may both humble himself toward God and also know himself to be a miserable sinner not worthy to be called His son, and yet surely trust that God's mercy is ready to forgive all those who are repentant. And the person who does not see these two things verified in himself can take no manner of due payment and profit by acknowledging and believing these things to be verified in others. But we cannot satisfy our minds, or settle our consciences, that these things are true, unless we see that God's Word so teaches this to us.

—Thomas Cranmer

### Hymnody

Light us to those heav'nly spheres,  
 Sun of grace, in glory shrouded;  
 Lead us through this vale of tears  
 To the land where days unclouded,  
 Purest joy, and perfect peace  
 Never cease.

—Come, Thou Bright and Morning  
 Star (*LSB* 872:5)

### Prayer of the Day

O God and Ruler over all our foes of body and soul, You strengthened Your servants Perpetua and Felicitas, giving them a confident and clear confession in the face of roaring beasts. Grant that we who remember

their faithful martyrdom may share in their blessed assurance of victory over all earthly and spiritual enemies and hold fast to the promise of everlasting life secured for us through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (1154)

### Perpetua and Felicitas, Martyrs

At the beginning of the third century, the Roman emperor Septimus Severus forbade conversions to Christianity. Among those disobeying that edict were Perpetua, a young noblewoman, and her maidservant Felicitas. Both were jailed at Carthage in North Africa along with three fellow Christians. During their imprisonment, Perpetua and Felicitas witnessed to their faith with such conviction that the officer in charge became a follower of Jesus. After making arrangements for the well-being of their children, Perpetua and Felicitas were executed on March 7, 203. Tradition holds that Perpetua showed mercy to her captors by falling on a sword because they could not bear to put her to death. The story of this martyrdom has been told ever since as an encouragement to persecuted Christians.

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord XI 16–23

## 8 MARCH

### Psalmody

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one who consid- | ers the poor!\*

- In the day of trouble  
the LORD de- | livers him;
- <sup>2</sup>the LORD protects him and keeps him alive;  
he is called blessed | in the land;\*  
you do not give him up to the will  
of his | enemies.
- <sup>7</sup>All who hate me whisper together  
a- | bout me;\*  
they imagine the | worst for me.
- <sup>8</sup>They say, “A deadly thing is poured | out  
on him;\*  
he will not rise again from | where  
he lies.”
- <sup>9</sup>Even my close friend in whom I | trusted,\*  
who ate my bread,  
has lifted his heel a- | gainst me.
- <sup>10</sup>But you, O LORD, be gra- | cious to me,\*  
and raise me up,  
that I may re- | pay them!
- <sup>11</sup>By this I know that you de- | light in me:\*  
my enemy will not shout  
in triumph | over me.
- <sup>12</sup>But you have upheld me because  
of my in- | tegrity,\*  
and set me in your presence for- | ever.
- <sup>13</sup>Blessèd be the LORD, the God of | Israel,\*  
from everlasting to everlasting! Amen  
and | Amen.  
—Psalm 41:1–2, 7–13

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 129*

**Old Testament Reading:**  
**Job 41:1–20, 31–34**

[The Lord Challenges Job]

- <sup>1</sup>“Can you draw out Leviathan  
with a fishhook  
or press down his tongue with a cord?
- <sup>2</sup>Can you put a rope in his nose  
or pierce his jaw with a hook?
- <sup>3</sup>Will he make many pleas to you?  
Will he speak to you soft words?

- <sup>4</sup>Will he make a covenant with you  
to take him for your servant forever?
- <sup>5</sup>Will you play with him as with a bird,  
or will you put him on a leash  
for your girls?
- <sup>6</sup>Will traders bargain over him?  
Will they divide him up among  
the merchants?
- <sup>7</sup>Can you fill his skin with harpoons  
or his head with fishing spears?
- <sup>8</sup>Lay your hands on him;  
remember the battle—you will not  
do it again!
- <sup>9</sup>Behold, the hope of a man is false;  
he is laid low even at the sight of him.
- <sup>10</sup>No one is so fierce that he dares  
to stir him up.  
Who then is he who can stand before me?
- <sup>11</sup>Who has first given to me,  
that I should repay him?  
Whatever is under the whole heaven  
is mine.
- <sup>12</sup>“I will not keep silence concerning  
his limbs,  
or his mighty strength,  
or his goodly frame.
- <sup>13</sup>Who can strip off his outer garment?  
Who would come near him  
with a bridle?
- <sup>14</sup>Who can open the doors of his face?  
Around his teeth is terror.
- <sup>15</sup>His back is made of rows of shields,  
shut up closely as with a seal.
- <sup>16</sup>One is so near to another  
that no air can come between them.
- <sup>17</sup>They are joined one to another;  
they clasp each other  
and cannot be separated.
- <sup>18</sup>His sneezings flash forth light,  
and his eyes are like the eyelids  
of the dawn.

- <sup>19</sup>Out of his mouth go flaming torches;  
sparks of fire leap forth.
- <sup>20</sup>Out of his nostrils comes forth smoke,  
as from a boiling pot and burning  
rushes. . . .
- <sup>31</sup>He makes the deep boil like a pot;  
he makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
- <sup>32</sup>Behind him he leaves a shining wake;  
one would think the deep  
to be white-haired.
- <sup>33</sup>On earth there is not his like,  
a creature without fear.
- <sup>34</sup>He sees everything that is high;  
he is king over all the sons of pride.”

### New Testament Reading: John 13:1–20

#### Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

<sup>1</sup>Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup>During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, <sup>4</sup>rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. <sup>5</sup>Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. <sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." <sup>8</sup>Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." <sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to him, "Lord,

not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." <sup>11</sup>For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

<sup>12</sup>When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup>You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. <sup>14</sup>If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup>For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup>If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. <sup>18</sup>I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' <sup>19</sup>I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. <sup>20</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

### Writing

No other creature—neither man nor angel—can or shall say, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me" [Matthew 28:18]. For although God is in the saints with all the fullness of His Godhead that He has everywhere with Himself, He does not dwell in them bodily. Nor is He personally united with them as in Christ. . . . Christ says, even according to His human

nature, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me” (Matthew 28:18). Also John 13:3 says, “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands.” Also Colossians 2:9 says, “For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.” Also Scripture says, “You have crowned Him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under His feet. Now in putting everything in subjection to Him, He left nothing outside His control” (Hebrews 2:7–8[; see also Psalm 8:6]). “He is excepted who put all things in subjection under Him” (1 Corinthians 15:27). . . .

God the Father has given His Spirit to Christ, His beloved Son, according to the received humanity. (Because of this He is called also *Messiah*; i.e., the Anointed.) He has not received His gifts with limits as other saints. For on Christ the Lord, according to His received human nature, rests “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge & the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:2; see also Colossians 2:3; Isaiah 61:1). (According to His divinity, He is of one essence with the Holy Spirit.) This not in such a way that, as a man, He knew and could do only some things, like other saints know and can do things by God’s Spirit, who works in them only created gifts. According to His divinity, Christ is the Second Person in the Holy Trinity. And from Him, as also from the Father, the Holy Spirit proceeds [John 15:26]. So the Spirit is and remains Christ’s [1 Peter 1:11] and the Father’s own Spirit to all eternity, not separated from God’s Son.

—Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord VIII 70, 72–73

## Hymnody

Jesus gave to His disciples  
A commandment that was new:  
“Show My love to one another,  
Do as I have done for you;  
All the world will know you love Me  
As you love each other too.”

—Jesus, Greatest at the Table  
(*LSB* 446:5)

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L32)

## Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula of Concord [XII] 1–19

## 9 MARCH

## Psalmody

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O LORD,  
that I may walk | in your truth;\*  
unite my heart to | fear your name.

<sup>12</sup> I give thanks to you, O Lord my God,  
with | my whole heart,\*  
and I will glorify your name for- | ever.

<sup>13</sup> For great is your steadfast | love  
toward me;\*  
you have delivered my soul  
from the depths | of Sheol.

<sup>14</sup> O God, insolent men have risen up against me; a band of ruthless men | seek my life,\* and they do not set you be- | fore them.

<sup>15</sup> But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and | gracious,\* slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and | faithfulness.

<sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me;\* give your strength to your servant, and save the son of your maid- | servant.

<sup>17</sup> Show me a sign of your | favor,\* that those who hate me may see and be put to shame because you, LORD, have helped me and com- | forted me.

—Psalm 86:11–17

*Additional Psalm: Psalm 136*

### Old Testament Reading: Job 42:1–17

Job's Confession and Repentance

<sup>1</sup>Then Job answered the Lord and said:

<sup>2</sup>"I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

<sup>3</sup>"Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?"

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

<sup>4</sup>Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.'

<sup>5</sup>I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;

<sup>6</sup>therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

The Lord Rebukes Job's Friends

<sup>7</sup>After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. <sup>8</sup>Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly. For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." <sup>9</sup>So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them, and the Lord accepted Job's prayer.

The Lord Restores Job's Fortunes

<sup>10</sup>And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. <sup>11</sup>Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and ate bread with him in his house. And they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him. And each of them gave him a piece of money and a ring of gold.

<sup>12</sup>And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. And he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. <sup>13</sup>He had also seven sons and three daughters. <sup>14</sup>And he called the name of the first daughter Jemimah, and the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Kerenhappuch. <sup>15</sup>And in all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters. And their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. <sup>16</sup>And after this Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons,

four generations. <sup>17</sup>And Job died, an old man, and full of days.

### New Testament Reading: John 13:21–38

#### One of You Will Betray Me

<sup>21</sup>After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” <sup>22</sup>The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. <sup>23</sup>One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus, <sup>24</sup>so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. <sup>25</sup>So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” <sup>26</sup>Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. <sup>27</sup>Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” <sup>28</sup>Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. <sup>29</sup>Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor. <sup>30</sup>So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

#### A New Commandment

<sup>31</sup>When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. <sup>32</sup>If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup>Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’ <sup>34</sup>A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved

you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

#### Jesus Foretells Peter’s Denial

<sup>36</sup>Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.” <sup>37</sup>Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” <sup>38</sup>Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.”

### Writing

But to what purpose is all this but that Job might understand (for this instruction was divinely inspired into him, that he might foreknow Christ’s coming to suffer)? That he might understand how patiently he ought to endure all that he went through, since Christ, though when He became man for us was absolutely without sin and though as God He possessed great power, did not refuse to obey, even to the suffering of death? When Job understood this with a purer intensity of heart, he added to his own answer these words: “I used before now to hear of You by the hearing of the ear; but behold now my eye sees You; therefore I abhor myself and melt away and account myself but dust and ashes.” Why was he thus so deeply displeased with himself? God’s work, in that he was man, could not rightly have given him displeasure, since it is even said to God Himself, “Do not despise the work of Your own hands.” It was indeed in view of that righteousness, in which he had discovered his own unrighteousness, that

he abhorred himself and melted away and deemed himself dust and ashes—beholding, as he did in his mind, the righteousness of Christ, in whom there could not possibly be any sin, not only in respect of His divinity but also of His soul and His flesh. It was also in view of this righteousness which is of God that the apostle Paul, though as “touching the righteousness which is of the law he was blameless,” yet “counted all things” not only as loss but even as dung.

—Augustine

### Hymnody

Break down the wall that would divide  
Thy children, Lord, on ev’ry side.  
My neighbor’s good let me pursue;  
Let Christian love bind warm and true.

—Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace  
(*LSB* 844:2)

### Prayer of the Day

Merciful and everlasting God, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all to bear our sins on the cross. Grant that our hearts may be so fixed with steadfast faith in Him that we fear not the power of sin, death, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (L31)

### Suggested Reading from the Book of Concord

Epitome of the Formula  
of Concord [XII] 20–31



# TIME OF EASTER ADDITION

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The Time of Easter is not set according to calendar dates, yet there are appointed to specific calendar dates feasts, festivals, and commemorations that may fall during the days that are appointed to the Time of Easter.<sup>1</sup> The earliest date for Ash Wednesday is February 4. The latest possible date for Holy Trinity is June 20. A writing and biography are provided in this section for those occasions of the Church Year that fall between those dates.

## FEASTS AND FESTIVALS

### *February*

24 St. Matthias, Apostle

### *March*

19 St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus

25 The Annunciation of Our Lord

### *April*

25 St. Mark, Evangelist

### *May*

1 St. Philip and St. James, Apostles

31 The Visitation

### *June*

11 St. Barnabas, Apostle

## COMMEMORATIONS

### *February*

5 Jacob (Israel), Patriarch

10 Silas, Fellow Worker of St. Peter and St. Paul

13 Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos

14 Valentine, Martyr

15 Philemon and Onesimus

16 Philipp Melanchthon (birth), Confessor

18 Martin Luther, Doctor and Confessor

23 Polycarp of Smyrna, Pastor and Martyr

### *March*

7 Perpetua and Felicitas, Martyrs

17 Patrick, Missionary to Ireland

31 Joseph, Patriarch

### *April*

6 Lucas Cranach and Albrecht Dürer, Artists

20 Johannes Bugenhagen, Pastor

21 Anselm of Canterbury, Theologian

24 Johann Walter, Kantor

### *May*

2 Athanasius of Alexandria, Pastor and Confessor

4 Friedrich Wyneken, Pastor and Missionary

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the dating of Easter, see page 000.

**May**

- 5 Frederick the Wise, Christian Ruler
- 7 C. F. W. Walther, Theologian
- 9 Job
- 11 Cyril and Methodius, Missionaries to the Slavs
- 21 Emperor Constantine, Christian Ruler, and Helena, Mother of Constantine

24 Esther

25 Bede the Venerable, Theologian

**June**

- 1 Justin, Martyr
- 5 Boniface of Mainz, Missionary to the Germans
- 12 The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, AD 325
- 14 Elisha

**5 FEBRUARY***Jacob (Israel), Patriarch***Writing for Jacob (Israel), Patriarch**

In Jacob, let us imitate the type of Christ. Let there be some likeness of his actions in ourselves. We shall have our share with him, if we imitate him. He was obedient to his mother; he yielded to his brother; he served his father-in-law; he sought his wages from the increase, not from a division of the flocks. There was no covetous division, where his portion brought such gain. Nor was that sign without a purpose, the ladder from earth to heaven, wherein was seen the future fellowship between men and angels through the cross of Christ, whose thigh was paralyzed, that in his thigh he might recognize the Heir of his body and foretell by the paralyzing of his thigh the suffering of his Heir.

—Ambrose

**Jacob (Israel), Patriarch**

Jacob, the third of the three Hebrew patriarchs, was the younger of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. After wrestling with

the Angel of the Lord, Jacob, whose name means “deceiver,” was renamed *Israel*, which means “he strives with God” (Genesis 25:26; 32:28). His family life was filled with trouble, caused by his acts of deception toward his father and his brother, Esau, and his parental favoritism toward his son Joseph (see 31 March). Much of his adult life was spent grieving over the death of his beloved wife Rachel and the presumed death of Joseph, who had been appointed by the Egyptian pharaoh to be in charge of food distribution during a time of famine in the land. Prior to Jacob’s death, through the blessing of his sons, God gave the promise that the Messiah would come through the line of Jacob’s fourth son, Judah (Genesis 49).

**10 FEBRUARY***Silas, Fellow Worker of St. Peter and St. Paul***Writing for Silas, Fellow Worker of St. Peter and St. Paul**

“And receiving,” it says, “a commandment from Paul, to Silas and Timothy, to come with all speed, they

departed.” For though he was Paul, nevertheless he needed them. And with good reason God urges them to go into Macedonia, for there lay Greece shining brightly before them.

See what zeal the rest of the disciples showed with respect to their leaders: not as it is now with us, who are separated and divided into great and small, some of us exalted, while others are envious. For this is the reason why some are envious, because we are puffed up, because we will not endure to be put upon a par with them. The reason why there is harmony in our physical body is because there is no puffing up, and there is no puffing up because the members stand in need of one another. The head has need of the feet. And God has made this to be the case with us, but, for all that, we will not endure it. Do you not hear how those outside the Church accuse us, say, “Necessity makes friendships”? The laity have need of us, and we exist for them. Since teacher or ruler would not exist if there were not persons to be taught, nor would he perform his part, for it would not be possible. . . . Nobody is able to do anything alone. . . . For instance, the poor need givers; the givers need receivers. “Consider how to encourage one another to love and good works.” (Hebrews 10:24). This is why the assembly of the whole Church has more power. What each cannot do by himself alone, he is able to do when joined with the rest. Therefore it is absolutely necessary that the prayers are offered up, here, for the world, for the Church, from one end of the earth to the other, for peace, for those who are in adversities.

—John Chrysostom

## Silas, Fellow Worker with Paul

Silas, a leader in the Church at Jerusalem, was chosen by Paul (Acts 15:40) to accompany him on his second missionary journey from Antioch to Asia Minor and Macedonia. Silas, also known as Silvanus, was imprisoned with Paul in Philippi and experienced the riots in Thessalonica and Berea. After rejoining Paul in Corinth, Silas apparently remained there for an extended time. Beyond that there is little further mention of Silas and his association with Paul.

## 13 FEBRUARY

*Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos*

### Writing for Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos

The Holy Spirit is given in a twofold way. First in a concealed manner, then openly, as He was granted to Cornelius and Apollos—about whom we read in Acts 10, 18, and 19—who searched so diligently. And in this way every one of the saints feels the first fruits of the Spirit. For they are happy. Their thoughts and words about Christ are the best, and they take pleasure in Him. They love Him. To them the Word is a joy, and this does not happen without the Holy Spirit. Therefore every Christian has the Holy Spirit, no matter how great and how little that may be. The fact that he fears death, that he feels disturbances—this he has from the flesh. But the fact that he becomes a partaker of peace and quiet—this is not born in us. To love Christ, to confess Christ, and to take pleasure in Him—this does not happen without the Holy Spirit. To confess the faith, to bear the

hatred of the world, to undergo exile and death—all this is proof of the Spirit.

—Martin Luther

### Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos

Aquila and his wife, Priscilla (Prisca), Jewish contemporaries of St. Paul, traveled widely. Because of persecution in Rome, they went to Corinth where they met the apostle Paul, who joined them in their trade of tentmaking (Acts 18:1–3). In turn, they joined Paul in his mission of proclaiming the Christian Gospel. The couple later traveled with Paul from Corinth to Ephesus (Acts 18:18), where the two of them established a home that served as hospitality headquarters for new converts to Christianity. Apollos was one of their numerous Jewish pupils in the faith. An eloquent man, Apollos, “being fervent in spirit . . . spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus” (Acts 18:25). He later traveled from Corinth to the province of Achaia, “showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus” (Acts 18:28). Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos are all remembered and honored for their great missionary zeal.

## 14 FEBRUARY

*Valentine, Martyr*

### Writing for Valentine, Martyr

For there are two loves from which proceed all desires, as different in quality as they are different in their sources. For the reasonable soul, which cannot exist without love, loves either God or the world. In the love of God there is no excess, but in the love

of the world all is hurtful. And therefore we must cling inseparably to eternal treasures, but we must use temporal things like those who are just passing by and as sojourners hastening to return to our own land. All the good things of this world that meet us on our journey may be used to help us on our way, but must not become snares to detain us. Therefore the blessed apostle makes this proclamation, “The time is short: it remains that those who have wives be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they wept not; and those who rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those who buy, as though they possessed not; and those that use this world, as though they used it not. For the things of this world are passing away.” But the world attracts us with its appearance and abundance and variety, so it is not easy to turn away unless we love the beauty of the Creator in the visible things around us. For when He says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your strength,” He wants us, in seeing the things around us, to grow stronger in our love for Him. And when He links the love of our neighbor to this command, He commands us to imitate His own goodness, that we should love what He loves and do what He does. For though we are “God’s field and God’s building,” and “neither is the one who plants anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase,” yet in all things He requires our ministry and service and wants us to be the stewards of His gifts, that he who bears God’s image may do God’s will. For this reason, in the Lord’s Prayer we say most devoutly, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” For what else do we ask for in these words but that God may subdue those

whom He has not yet subdued, and as in heaven He makes the angels ministers of His will, so also on earth He may make men his servants? And in seeking this, we love God and also our neighbor; and the love within us has but one Object, since we desire the bond servant to serve and the Lord to rule.

—Leo the Great

### Valentine, Martyr

A physician and priest living in Rome during the rule of Emperor Claudius, Valentine became one of the noted martyrs of the third century. The commemoration of his death, which occurred in AD 270, became part of the calendar of remembrance in the Early Church of the West. Tradition suggests that on the day of his execution for his Christian faith, Valentine left a note of encouragement for a child of his jailer written on an irregularly shaped piece of paper. This greeting became a pattern for millions of written expressions of love and caring that now are the highlight of Valentine's Day in many nations.

## 15 FEBRUARY

*Philemon and Onesimus*

### Writing for Philemon and Onesimus

We should know that there must be a public ministry of the Gospel and public assemblies, as we are taught in Ephesians 4:10–12. And this assembly we must join; of this visible assembly we must be citizens and members, as the psalmist commands us: “Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your glory

dwells” (Psalm 26:8); and again: “How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts!” (Psalm 84:1). These and similar passages do not speak of a Platonic idea, but are talking about the visible church, in which the voice of the Gospel resounds and where there is witnessed the ministry of the Gospel. And thus God reveals Himself and is efficacious. And we should not praise those vagabonds who roam about and join no congregation because they cannot find an ideal [church] in which there is not something lacking in morals and discipline. We should rather seek the church in which the articles of faith are taught purely and no idolatry is defended. That church we should join, hear, and love its doctrine as we unite our intercession and confession with their prayers and confession. We should also learn to support it in order that it may not be devastated. For where there are no assemblies, there the voice of the Gospel becomes silent. So the Muslim tyrants in many places destroyed all churches and did not permit even their own people to assemble. We should recognize that such satanic devastations and dispersions are a dreadful and very great evil. Therefore, we should ask God that He may preserve His congregations, and we ourselves should support them with all our resources.

—Philip Melanchthon

### Philemon and Onesimus

Philemon was a prominent first-century Christian who owned a slave named Onesimus. Although the name *Onesimus* means “useful,” Onesimus proved himself “useless” when he ran away from his master and perhaps even stole from him (Philemon 18). Somehow Onesimus came into contact

with the apostle Paul while the latter was in prison (possibly in Rome), and through Paul's proclamation of the Gospel, he became a Christian. After confessing to the apostle that he was a runaway slave, Onesimus was directed by Paul to return to his master and become "useful" again. In order to help pave the way for Onesimus's peaceful return home, Paul sent him on his way with a letter addressed to Philemon, a letter in which he urged Philemon to forgive his slave for running away and to "receive him as you would receive me" (v. 17), "no longer as a slave but . . . as a beloved brother" (v. 16). The letter was eventually included by the Church as one of the books of the New Testament.

## 16 FEBRUARY

*Philip Melancthon (birth), Confessor*

### Writing for Philip Melancthon, Confessor

I recognize the meagerness and insufficiency of my own writings. Although I am anxious to speak clearly and in proper language, yet it can happen—especially in so great a mountain of things and with so great need for brevity—that from time to time something may be said which is a little unclear or less than perfect. Therefore, I am not trying to evade the judgment of our churches. For I truly believe that they are the church of God, and with true godliness of mind I respect them, and I will not separate myself from them. I am submitting my words, my writings, and my actions to their judgment. I have often hoped that others who excel me in learning and judgment would

share their counsel and their comparison of my statements about these matters and my forms of speaking. I have hoped that by their great authority they would produce such a work as would include in proper order the chief points of Christian doctrine. I would suggest that this ought to be of concern to godly and wise rulers, especially in such times of great confusion. But we see that the church is not ruled by the counsels of men.

Therefore, I pray to God, the everlasting Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the sake of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom He willed to be a sacrifice for us, both as a mediator and our suppliant. I pray that He would gather His church to Himself, rule and preserve it, guide the minds of those who teach and those who learn, aid their studies, and turn many to the truth and love of concord. Since Christ in His suffering prayed thus, let us join our prayers and our groanings to the prayer of our High Priest, who prayed, "Father, sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth." [John 17:17]. Do not allow the light of the truth to be extinguished, that is, the light of Your Gospel. And He adds, "That they may all be one, even as We are one," [v. 21] that they may first be joined with Us, and then be in harmony among themselves, and then work for the true peace of the church by performing their duties in a righteous manner.

—Philip Melancthon

### Philip Melancthon, Confessor (birth date)

Philip Melancthon (1497–1560) was a brilliant student of the classics and a humanist scholar. In 1518, he was appointed

to teach along with Martin Luther at the University of Wittenberg. At Luther's urging, Melancthon began teaching theology and Scripture in addition to his courses in classical studies. In April 1530, Emperor Charles V called an official meeting between the representatives of Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism, hoping to effect a meeting of minds between two opposing groups. Since Luther was at that time under papal excommunication and an imperial ban, Melancthon was assigned the duty of being the chief Lutheran representative at this meeting. He is especially remembered and honored as the author of the Augsburg Confession, which was officially presented by the German princes to the emperor on June 25, 1530, as the defining document of Lutheranism within Christendom. Melancthon died on April 19, 1560.

## 18 FEBRUARY

*Martin Luther, Doctor and Confessor*

### Writing for Martin Luther, Doctor and Confessor

There is no other way—if we desire to possess Christ, to live and to rule with him in eternity, then suffering must first be endured.

Because this is so, why should we heed the rage and fury of such deadly powers, of whom Psalm 2[:4] says God in heaven laughs at them and holds them in derision.

If the eternal and omnipotent emperor whose name is God and who lives to all eternity mocks and derides them, why should we fear them, or mourn and weep? Truly, God does not mock them in his own defense.

He will always be the one dwelling in heaven no matter how they rage against him. But he mocks them to encourage us, so that we may take heart and bravely laugh at their onslaughts.

Therefore the only thing necessary for us to do is to believe and to pray most confidently in Christ's name that God will give us strength, since he has erected his kingdom and this is his doing. It is he who without our help, counsel, thought, or effort has brought his kingdom forth and has advanced and preserved it to this day. I have no doubt that he will consummate it without our advice or assistance. Because "I know in whom I believe," as St. Paul says [2 Tim. 1:12], I am certain that he will grant me more, do far more abundantly, and help and counsel us beyond all that we ask or think [Eph. 3:20]. He is called the Lord who can and will help in a wonderful, glorious, and mighty way, particularly when the need is the greatest. We are meant to be human beings, not divine. So let us take comfort in his word and, trusting his promise, call upon him confidently for deliverance in time of distress and he will help.

That is all there is to it; we have no alternative; otherwise, eternal unrest would be our reward. May God save us from that for the sake of his dear Son, our Savior and eternal Priest, Jesus Christ. Amen.

—Martin Luther

### Martin Luther, Doctor and Confessor

Martin Luther, born on November 10, 1483, in Eisleben, Germany, initially began studies leading toward a degree in law. However, after a close encounter with death, he switched to the study of theology,

entered an Augustinian monastery, was ordained a priest in 1505, and received a doctorate in theology in 1512. As a professor at the newly established University of Wittenberg, Luther's scriptural studies led him to question many of the Church's teachings and practices, especially the selling of indulgences. His refusal to back down from his convictions resulted in his excommunication in 1521. Following a period of seclusion at the Wartburg castle, Luther returned to Wittenberg, where he spent the rest of his life preaching and teaching, translating the Scriptures, and writing hymns and numerous theological treatises. He is remembered and honored for his lifelong emphasis on the biblical truth that for Christ's sake God declares us righteous by grace through faith alone. Luther died on February 18, 1546, while visiting the town of his birth.

## 23 FEBRUARY

*Polycarp of Smyrna, Pastor and Martyr*

### Writing for Polycarp of Smyrna, Pastor and Martyr

As Polycarp entered the stadium, a voice from heaven came to him, saying, "Be strong, and show yourself a man, O Polycarp!" No one saw who it was that spoke to him, but our brothers who were there heard it. As he was brought forward, there was a great uproar in the crowd when they heard it was Polycarp. And when he came near, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp. When he admitted he was, the proconsul tried to persuade him to deny Christ, saying, "Be

mindful of your old age," and similar things, according to their custom, such as, "Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent, and say, 'Away with the Atheists.'" But Polycarp, looking out on the crowds, with a very stern face, groaned and looked up to heaven and waved at the crowd of wicked heathen in the stadium and said, "Away with the Atheists!" Then, the proconsul urged him, saying, "Swear, and I will set you free! Reproach Christ!" Polycarp declared, "I have served Him for 86 years, and He never did me any injury. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?" . . .

Then the proconsul said to him, "I have wild beasts here, and I'm going to throw you to them unless you repent." But he answered, "Call them then, for we are not used to repenting of what is good in order to adopt something evil. Besides, it is good for me to be changed from something evil into something that is righteous." But again the proconsul said to him, "I will have you burned alive, since you despise the wild beasts, unless you repent." But Polycarp said, "You threaten me with a fire that will burn for only an hour and then is put out, but you don't know about the fire of the judgment to come and the eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly. Why are you waiting? Go ahead, do what you need to do." . . .

They did not nail him to the stake, but simply tied him to it. He put his hands behind him, and being bound like a distinguished ram taken out of a great flock for sacrifice, and prepared to be an acceptable burnt-offering to God, Polycarp looked up to heaven and said, "O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Your beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of You, the God of

angels and powers and of every creature and of the whole race of the righteous who live before You, I give You thanks that You have counted me worthy of this day and this hour, that I should have a part in the number of Your martyrs, in the cup of Your Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, through the incorruption given by the Holy Spirit. May I be accepted among them this day before You as a fat and acceptable sacrifice, according as You, the ever-truthful God, have foreordained and have revealed beforehand to me and now have fulfilled. Therefore I praise You for all things. I bless You. I glorify You, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, with whom, to You, and the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and to all coming ages. Amen.”

—from *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*

### **Polycarp of Smyrna, Pastor and Martyr**

Born around AD 69, Polycarp was a central figure in the Early Church. A disciple of the evangelist John, he linked the first generation of believers to later Christians. After serving for many years as bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp was arrested, tried, and executed for his faith on February 23, in AD 155 or 156. An eyewitness narrative of his death, *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, continues to encourage believers in times of persecution.

## **24 FEBRUARY**

*St. Matthias, Apostle*

### **Writing for St. Matthias, Apostle**

After one of the apostles was cut off, Christ commanded the eleven others to “go and teach all nations and baptize them into the Father, and into the Son, and into the Holy Spirit.” The apostles (which means “sent ones”) immediately starting doing this. Having chosen Matthias as the twelfth apostle in the place of Judas, on the basis of the authoritative prophecy found in a psalm of David, they received the promised power of the Holy Spirit for the gift of miracles and preaching. They established churches throughout Judea, by bearing witness to the faith in Jesus Christ. Then they went out into the world and preached the same doctrine of the same faith to the nations, establishing churches in every city, from which all the other churches, one after another, received the tradition of faith and doctrine. Every day there are more churches being established. This is precisely why only these churches are able to call themselves apostolic, because they are the offspring of apostolic churches. . . . Therefore, though there are so many churches, they all comprise the one original church founded by the apostles. In this way, they are all originally apostolic and one, in unity, peaceful communion, and are brothers in the bond of hospitality, privileges which derive from no other rule than the one tradition from the same mystery.

From this we draw up our rule of faith . . . all doctrine that agrees with the apostolic churches, which are the molds and original sources, must be regarded as the truth that

contains what was received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God. All doctrine must immediately be regarded as false that has the taste of being different from that which the churches received from the apostles, from Christ, from God.

—Tertullian

### St. Matthias, Apostle

St. Matthias is one of the lesser-known apostles. According to the Early Church Fathers, Matthias was one of the seventy-two sent out by Jesus in Luke 10:1–20. After the ascension, Matthias was chosen by lot to fill the vacancy in the Twelve resulting from the death of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:16–25). Early Church tradition places Matthias in a number of locations. Some historians suggest that he went to Ethiopia; others place him in Armenia, the first nation to adopt Christianity as a national religion. Martyred for his faith, Matthias may well have met his death at Colchis in Asia Minor, around AD 50. The Church of St. Matthias at Trier, Germany, claims the honor of being the final burial site for Matthias, the only one of the Twelve to be buried in Europe north of the Alps.

## 7 MARCH

*Perpetua and Felicitas, Martyrs*

### Writing for Perpetua and Felicitas, Martyrs

The crowd jumped to its feet so they could watch Perpetua and Felicitas move to where they had been told and see the sword pierce their bodies, thus making their eyes partner in the murder. But first they kissed

one another, that they might consummate their martyrdom with the kiss of peace, then all the martyrs, immoveable and silently, received the sword-thrust, especially Saturus, who also had first climbed the ladder. He was waiting for Perpetua and was the first to give up his spirit. So that she might taste some pain, being pierced between the ribs, she cried out loudly, and she herself placed the wavering right hand of the youthful gladiator to her throat. Such a woman could not have been killed unless she herself had willed it, because she was feared by the impure spirit.

O most brave and blessed martyrs! O truly called and chosen for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, who exalts and honors whomever He chooses! We ought to read these recent accounts for the edification of the Church, no less than the older ones, so that new virtues also may testify that one and the same Holy Spirit is always operating even until now, with God the Father Omnipotent, and His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom belongs the glory and infinite power, forever and ever. Amen.

—Tertullian

### Perpetua and Felicitas, Martyrs

At the beginning of the third century, the Roman emperor Septimus Severus forbade conversions to Christianity. Among those disobeying that edict were Perpetua, a young noblewoman, and her maidservant Felicitas. Both were jailed at Carthage in North Africa along with three fellow Christians. During their imprisonment, Perpetua and Felicitas witnessed to their faith with such conviction that the officer in charge became a follower of Jesus. After making arrangements for the well-being of their children, Perpetua and

Felicitas were executed on March 7, 203. Tradition holds that Perpetua showed mercy to her captors by falling on a sword because they could not bear to put her to death. The story of this martyrdom has been told ever since as an encouragement to persecuted Christians.

## 17 MARCH

*Patrick, Missionary to Ireland*

### **Writing for Patrick, Missionary to Ireland**

I bind unto myself today  
The strong name of the Trinity,  
By invocation of the same  
The Three in One and One in Three.

I bind this today to me forever  
By power of faith, Christ's incarnation;  
His baptism in Jordan River,  
His death on cross for my salvation;  
His bursting from the spiced tomb,  
His riding up the heavenly way,  
His coming at the day of doom  
I bind unto myself today.

I bind unto myself the power  
Of the great love of cherubim;  
The sweet "Well done" in judgment hour,  
The service of the seraphim,  
Confessors' faith, apostles' word,  
The patriarchs' prayers, the prophets' scrolls,  
All good deeds done unto the Lord  
And purity of virgin souls.

I bind unto myself today  
The virtues of the star lit heaven,  
The glorious sun's life-giving ray,  
The whiteness of the moon at even,

The flashing of the lightning free,  
The whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,  
The stable earth, the deep salt sea  
Around the old eternal rocks.

I bind unto myself today  
The power of God to hold and lead,  
His eye to watch, His might to stay,  
His ear to hearken to my need.  
The wisdom of my God to teach,  
His hand to guide, His shield to ward;  
The word of God to give me speech,  
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Against the demon snares of sin,  
The vice that gives temptation force,  
The natural lusts that war within,  
The hostile men that mar my course;  
Or few or many, far or nigh,  
In every place and in all hours,  
Against their fierce hostility  
I bind to me these holy powers.

Against all Satan's spells and wiles,  
Against false words of heresy,  
Against the knowledge that defiles,  
Against the heart's idolatry,  
Against the wizard's evil craft,  
Against the death wound and the burning,  
The choking wave, the poisoned shaft,  
Protect me, Christ, till Thy returning.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

I bind unto myself the name,  
The strong name of the Trinity,  
By invocation of the same,

The Three in One and One in Three.  
 By whom all nature hath creation,  
 Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:  
 Praise to the Lord of my salvation,  
 Salvation is of Christ the Lord.  
 —St. Patrick’s Breastplate

### Patrick, Missionary to Ireland

Patrick is one of the best-known of the missionary saints. Born to a Christian family in Britain around the year AD 389 he was captured as a teenager by raiders, taken to Ireland, and forced to serve as a herdsman. After six years, he escaped and found his way to a monastery community in France. Ordained a bishop, it is believed that Patrick made his way back to Ireland in the summer of 433, and there spent the rest of his long life spreading the Gospel and organizing Christian communities. He strongly defended the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in a time when it was not popular to do so. His literary legacy includes his autobiography, *Confession*, and several prayers and hymns still used in the Church today. At least one tradition states that Patrick died in Ireland on March 17 around the year AD 466.

## 19 MARCH

*St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus*

### Writing for St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus

When Joseph became aware that Mary was with child, and was thinking of putting her away privately, the angel said to him while he was asleep: “Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for her conception is from the Holy Spirit. For she will deliver

a Son and you will call Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” . . . So Joseph was convinced beyond all doubt, and he took Mary and joyfully obeyed everything in regard to all the rest of the education of Christ, undertaking a journey into Egypt and back again, and then went away to Nazareth. Those who do not know the Scriptures, nor the promise of God, nor the dispensation of Christ, call him the father of the child. For this reason, too, the Lord Himself read at Capernaum the prophecies of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me; He has sent Me to preach the Gospel to the poor and to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and to give sight to the blind.” Thus He showed that it was He Himself who had been foretold by Isaiah the prophet, and He said to them: “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears.”

—Irenaeus

### St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus

St. Joseph has been honored throughout the Christian centuries for his faithful devotion in helping Mary raise her Son. Matthew’s Gospel relates that Joseph was a just man, who followed the angel’s instructions and took the already-pregnant Mary as his wife (Matthew 1:24). In the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark, Jesus is referred to as “the carpenter’s son” (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). This suggests that Joseph had building skills with which he supported his family. Joseph was an important figure in the early life of Jesus, safely escorting Mary and the child to Egypt (Matthew 2:14) and then settling them back in Nazareth once it was safe to do so

(Matthew 2:22). The final mention of Joseph is at the time the twelve-year-old Jesus visits the temple in Jerusalem for the Passover (Luke 2:41–51). Joseph, the guardian of our Lord, has long been associated with caring parenthood as well as with skilled craftsmanship.

## 25 MARCH

*The Annunciation of Our Lord*

### Writing for The Annunciation of Our Lord

Most of the holy fathers and patriarchs and prophets desired to see Him with their own eyes, but did not. Some of them by visions beheld Him in type, and darkly; others, again, were privileged to hear the divine voice through the medium of the cloud and were favored with the vision of holy angels. But only to Mary the pure virgin did the archangel Gabriel manifest himself in brilliant light, bringing her the glad address, “Hail, you who are highly favored!” And thus she received the Word, and soon, in time, through the body’s natural process, she gave birth to the dear Pearl. Come, then, you, too, dearly beloved, and let us chant the melody that has been taught us by the inspired harp of David and say, “Arise, O Lord, into Your rest, You, and the ark of Your sanctuary.” For the holy Virgin is truly an ark, made with gold both within and without, who has received the whole treasury of the Holy of Holies. “Arise, O Lord, into Your rest.” Arise, O Lord, out of the bosom of the Father, in order that You may raise up the fallen race of the first man. . . . Mary laid in a manger

Him who sits above the cherubim and is praised by myriads of angels. In the manger set apart for irrational animals, the Word of God lay, in order that He might impart to men, who are really irrational by free choice, the true reason and understanding. In the manger from which cattle eat was laid the heavenly Bread, in order that He might provide men who live like the beasts of the earth with spiritual food. Nor was there even room for Him in the inn. He found no place, who by His word established heaven and earth; “for though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor” and chose extreme humiliation on behalf of the salvation of our nature, in His inherent goodness toward us. He who fulfilled the whole administration of unutterable mysteries of God’s work in heaven in the bosom of the Father, and in the cave lay in the arms of the mother, reposed in the manger. Angelic choirs surrounded Him, singing of glory in heaven and of peace upon earth. In heaven He was seated at the right hand of the Father; and in the manger He rested, as it were, upon the cherubim. Truly, even there was His cherubic throne; there was His royal seat. Holy of the holy, and alone glorious upon the earth, and holier than the holy, was the manger where Christ our God rested. To Him be glory, honor, and power, together with the Father undefiled and the altogether holy and quickening Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of the ages. Amen.

—Gregory Thaumaturgus

### The Annunciation of Our Lord

The angel Gabriel appears to Mary and announces that God has shown her favor and will use her as the means for the

Messiah's birth. So Mary conceives Jesus when the angel says: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Luke 1:35). This same Spirit who hovered over the waters and brought forth creation (Genesis 1:2) will now "hover over" the waters of Mary's womb to conceive the creation's Redeemer. As the Holy Spirit comes upon Mary, she conceives Jesus "through her ear" (as Martin Luther says). The one who is conceived is called Holy, the Son of God. This is the moment of the incarnation of our Lord. The date of the Annunciation falls on March 25, because the Ancient Church believed the crucifixion occurred on that date. In antiquity, people linked the day of a person's conception with the day of his or her death. Thus, in the Annunciation, the Church joined together both the incarnation of Jesus and the atonement He accomplished.

### 31 MARCH

*Joseph, Patriarch*

#### Writing for Joseph, Patriarch

I would like to tell you an instructive and profitable story. What is it? Once, when a persecution arose, and a severe war was raging against the Church, two men were arrested. The one man was ready to suffer anything at all. The other man was prepared to submit with firmness to be beheaded, but was afraid and trembling and shied away from other tortures. So, how did things turn out for them? When the judge was seated, he ordered the one who was ready to endure anything, to be beheaded. The

other he caused to be hung up and tortured, and that not once or twice, but from city to city. Now why was this permitted? That he might recover through torture that quality of mind which he had neglected, that he might shake off all cowardice, and no longer be afraid to endure anything. Joseph, too, when he wanted to escape from prison, was left to remain there. For hear him saying, "Indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; please mention me to the king." And for this he was made to remain, that he might learn not to place hope or confidence in men, but to cast everything on God. Knowing these things, therefore let us give thanks to God, and let us do all things that are expedient for us, that we may obtain the good things to come, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory, with the Holy Spirit, now and ever and world without end. Amen.

—John Chrysostom

#### Joseph, Patriarch

Joseph was the son of the patriarch Jacob (February 5) and Rachel. The favorite son of his father, Joseph incurred the jealousy of his older brothers, who sold him into slavery in Egypt and told their father he was dead (Genesis 37). In Egypt, Joseph became the chief servant in the home of Potiphar, a military official. Because Joseph refused to commit adultery with his master's wife, he was unjustly accused of attempted rape and thrown into jail (Genesis 39). Years later, he interpreted dreams for Pharaoh, who then freed Joseph from prison and placed him in charge of the entire country. When his brothers came from Canaan to Egypt in search of food, they did not recognize Joseph. He eventually revealed his identity to

them, forgave them, and invited both them and his father to live in Egypt. Joseph is especially remembered and honored for his moral uprightness (Genesis 39) and for his willingness to forgive his brothers (Genesis 45 and 50).

## 6 APRIL

*Lucas Cranach and Albrecht Dürer, Artists*

### Writing for Lucas Cranach and Albrecht Dürer, Artists

Who can exhaust all the virtue and power of God's Word? The Holy Scriptures, sermons, and all Christian books do nothing but praise God's Word, as we also do daily in our reading, writing, preaching, singing, poetizing, and in painting. This blessing abides and sustains us when the temporal blessings vanish and when through death we part from them and from one another. This blessing does not leave us or depart from us; it goes through death with us, tears us out of it, and brings us to eternal life, where there is neither death nor fear of dying.

—Martin Luther

### Lucas Cranach and Albrecht Dürer, Artists

Lucas Cranach (1472–1557), a close friend of Martin Luther, was a celebrated painter of portraits and altarpieces and a producer of woodcuts of religious subjects. Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), a native of Nürnberg, Germany, was one of the most learned of Renaissance artists and an ardent admirer of Martin Luther. His paintings and woodcuts include examples of the splendor

of creation and skilled portrayals of biblical narratives. Both Cranach and Dürer are remembered and honored for the grandeur of their works of art, which depict the glory and majesty and the grace and mercy of the triune God.

## 20 APRIL

*Johannes Bugenhagen, Pastor*

### Writing for Johannes Bugenhagen, Pastor

We should rejoice with our dear father Luther that he left and departed from us to the Lord Christ in the highest apostolic and prophetic office in which he faithfully accomplished what he was commanded. For with Christ are the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and many to whom he preached the Gospel, all the holy angels, and Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham, that is, in the eternal joy of all believers. We will experience what this interim period until the Day of Judgment is like, as Paul says in Philippians 1: "I desire to depart and to be with Christ"; and as Stephen also says in Acts: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"; and Jesus to the thief: "Today you will be with Me in paradise." For there is no doubt, just as the spirit of Christ was in the hands of the Father until the resurrection on Easter, since He said: "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit," etc., so will our spirits be in the hands of Christ until our resurrection. For that is the meaning of the words of Lazarus: "But now he is comforted while you are tormented." Our dear father Dr. Martin Luther has now attained what he often

desired. And if he were to return to us again now, he would reprimand our mourning and faint-heartedness with the word of Christ from John 16: “If you loved Me you would rejoice because I go to the Father, and you would not begrudge Me this eternal rest and joy.” Christ has conquered death for us. Why, then, are we afraid? The death of the body is for us a beginning of life eternal through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has become for us a noble, precious sacrifice. I still remember that when our honorable, dear father, Dr. Martin Luther, saw several depart sweetly in the confession of Christ, he said: “May God grant me that I may also depart so sweetly in the bosom of Christ and that the body may not be tormented with lengthy pains of death. But may God’s will be done.”

—Johannes Bugenhagen

### **Johannes Bugenhagen, Pastor**

Johannes Bugenhagen (1485–1558), from Pomerania in northern Germany, was appointed pastor of Wittenberg in 1523 through the efforts of Martin Luther. Thus he served as Luther’s own pastor and confessor. One of the greatest scholars of the Reformation era, Bugenhagen helped translate the New Testament into Low German and wrote a commentary on the Psalms. He also worked to organize the Lutheran Church in northern Germany and Denmark. In 1539, Bugenhagen became superintendent of the Church in Saxony. After the death of Luther, Bugenhagen took care of Luther’s widow and children. Bugenhagen died in Wittenberg in 1558.

## **21 APRIL**

*Anselm of Canterbury, Theologian*

### **Writing for Anselm of Canterbury, Theologian**

The restoration of human nature by God is more wonderful than its creation. Both were equally easy for God; but before man was made he had not sinned so that he ought not to be denied existence. But after man was made, he deserved, by his sin, to lose his existence together with its design, though he never has wholly lost this, viz., that he should be one capable of being punished or of receiving God’s compassion. For neither of these things could take effect if he were annihilated. Therefore God’s restoring man is more wonderful than his creating man, inasmuch as it is done for the sinner contrary to what he deserves; while the act of creation was not for the sinner and was not in opposition to what man deserved. How great a thing it is, also, for God and man to unite in one person, that, while the perfection of each nature is preserved, the same being may be both God and man! Who, then, will dare to think that the human mind can discover how wisely, how wonderfully, so incomprehensible a work has been accomplished?

—Anselm

### **Anselm of Canterbury, Theologian**

Born in Italy in 1033, Anselm is most closely associated with England, where he served as archbishop of Canterbury for many years. A brilliant scholar and writer, Anselm used his political skills with the British kings on behalf of the established Christian

Church, affirming that it is the leadership of the Church, not the state, that is responsible for establishing structure and maintaining order among the clergy. Anselm is especially remembered for his classic book, *Why God Became Man*, which taught that the reason for the incarnation was that Jesus, the Son of God, would suffer and die in place of sinners.

## 24 APRIL

*Johann Walter, Kantor*

### Writing for Johann Walter, Kantor

Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise . . . . For whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate—and who could number all these masters of the human heart, namely, the emotions, inclinations, and affections that impel men to evil or good?—what more effective means than music could you find? The Holy Ghost himself honors her as an instrument for his proper work when in his Holy Scriptures he asserts that through her his gifts were instilled in the prophets, namely, the inclination to all virtues, as can be seen in Elisha [II Kings 3:15]. On the other hand, she serves to cast out Satan, the instigator of all sins, as is shown in Saul, the king of Israel [I Sam. 16:23].

—Martin Luther

### Johann Walter, Kantor

Johann Walter (1496–1570) began service at the age of twenty-one as a composer and bass singer in the court

chapel of Frederick the Wise. In 1524, Walter published a collection of hymns arranged according to the Church Year. It was well received and served as the model for numerous subsequent hymnals. In addition to serving for thirty years as kantor (church musician) in the German cities of Torgau and Dresden, he also assisted Martin Luther in the preparation of the *Deutsche Messe*, or “German Mass” (1526). Walter is remembered as the first Lutheran kantor and composer of church music.

## 25 APRIL

*St. Mark, Evangelist*

### Writing for St. Mark, Evangelist

We shall add, as being a matter of primary importance, a tradition regarding Mark who wrote the Gospel, which [Papias] has given in the following words: “And the presbyter said this. Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him. But afterward, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instructions to the needs [of his listeners], but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord’s sayings. That is why Mark made no mistake when he wrote these things as he remembered them. Above all else, he took special care not to omit anything he had heard and not to put anything fictitious into what he wrote.”

—*Fragments of Papias*

## St. Mark, Evangelist

St. Mark was the author of the second Gospel, which he composed, according to some Early Church Fathers, when the Christians in Rome asked him to write down the preaching of the apostle Peter. Mark, also known as John Mark, was originally from Jerusalem, where the house of his mother Mary was the center of the early Jerusalem Church (Acts 12:12). He was brought from Jerusalem by Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 12:25), and it was from this city that they set out on the first missionary journey. When Paul and Barnabas were preparing to go on the second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them again, but Paul objected because Mark had left them during the first journey. Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas as his new companion (Acts 15:37–40). Later, Paul reconciled with Mark and was working with him again (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11). Finally, Mark was found laboring with Peter in Rome (1 Peter 5:13). Tradition says that Mark was instrumental in founding the Church in Alexandria, becoming its first bishop, and also that he suffered a martyr's death.

## 1 MAY

*St. Philip and St. James, Apostles*

### Writing for St. Philip and St. James, Apostles

Somebody might ask, “Why did the Gospel writers tell us only how Peter and James, John and Philip were called, but not the others?” It is because these, more than the rest, were in such a lowly walk of life. There is nothing worse than being a tax collector or more ordinary than being a fisherman. Philip was clearly not from a noble class, as is clear from where he came. They reveal their lowly ways of life so that we will believe them when they declare the glorious parts of their life. They did not choose to pass by anything that would be considered shameful, but since they are so careful to tell us all these sort of details, no matter whether they relate to the Teacher or to the disciples, how can they be suspected when they write about those things that require our reverence? Even more so, since they pass over many signs and miracles, while the events of the cross, which are considered to be so shameful, they tell us about with great clarity and boldness. They even tell us about the lowly jobs of the disciples, and the faults and failings in the Master's ancestors, some of whom were notorious for their very public sins. They are very clear about this. Thus, it is very clear that they are concerned about the truth above all else and did not write to gain favor or for the sake of appearances.

—John Chrysostom

## St. Philip and St. James, Apostles

St. Philip is mentioned in the lists of the apostles (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13), but only in John's Gospel is more told about him. Philip was from Bethsaida in Galilee and one of the first disciples called after Peter and Andrew. Philip also was instrumental in bringing Nathanael to Jesus (John 1:43–51). It was to Philip that Jesus posed the question about where to buy bread to feed five thousand men (John 6:5). During Holy Week, Philip with Andrew brought some inquiring Greeks to Jesus (John 12:20–22). And on Maundy Thursday evening, Philip asked Jesus to show the Father to him and to the rest of the disciples (John 14:8). According to tradition, Philip went to labor in Phrygia and was buried there.

St. James was a son of Alphaeus and was also called “the Younger” (to distinguish him from James, the son of Zebedee, “the Elder,” whose festival day is July 25). His mother, Mary, was one of the faithful women who stood at the cross of Jesus (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40). James is mentioned in the same apostolic lists as Philip, but there is no other mention of him in the New Testament. There is also no information regarding his field of labor or the circumstances of his death, except that he may have been martyred by being sawed in two.

## 2 MAY

*Athanasius of Alexandria,  
Pastor and Confessor*

### Writing for Athanasius of Alexandria, Pastor and Confessor

The incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God comes to our realm, even though He was not far from us before. For no part of creation is left void of Him. He has filled all things everywhere, remaining present with His own Father. But He comes in condescension to show loving-kindness to us and to visit us. . . . Seeing the exceeding wickedness of mankind, and how little by little they had increased it to an intolerable pitch against themselves, and seeing, finally, how all people were under penalty of death, He took pity on our race and had mercy on our infirmity and condescended to our corruption and, unable to tolerate that death should have the mastery—lest the creature should perish and His Father's handiwork in men be for nothing—He takes to Himself a body, and that of no different sort from ours. For He did not simply will to become embodied or will merely to appear. For if He willed merely to appear, He was able to effect His divine appearance by some other and higher means as well. But He takes a body of our kind, and not merely so, but from a spotless and stainless virgin, knowing not a man, a body clean and in very truth pure from intercourse of men. For being Himself mighty, and Artificer of everything, He prepares the body in the Virgin as a temple unto Himself and makes it His very own as an instrument, in it manifested, and in it dwelling. And thus taking from our bodies

one of like nature, because all were under penalty of the corruption of death, He gave it over to death in the stead of all and offered it to the Father—doing this, moreover, of His loving-kindness, to the end that, first, all being held to have died in Him, the law involving the ruin of men might be undone (inasmuch as its power was fully spent in the Lord’s body and had no longer holding-ground against men, His peers) and that, second, whereas men had turned toward corruption, He might turn them again toward incorruption and quicken them from death by the appropriation of His body and by the grace of the resurrection, banishing death from them like straw from the fire.

—Athanasius

### **Athanasius of Alexandria, Pastor and Confessor**

Athanasius was born in Alexandria in Egypt around AD 295. He served as a church leader in a time of great controversy and ecclesiastical disagreement. At the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, Athanasius defended Christian orthodoxy against the proponents of the Arian heresy, which denied the full divinity of Jesus Christ. During his forty-five-year tenure as bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius wrote numerous works that defended the orthodox teaching. His enemies had him exiled five times; on two occasions he was almost murdered. Yet Athanasius remained steadfast and ended his days restored fully to his ecclesiastical responsibilities. The Athanasian Creed, though not composed by Athanasius, is named in his honor because it confesses the doctrinal orthodoxy he championed throughout his life.

## **4 MAY**

*Friedrich Wyneken, Pastor and Missionary*

### **Writing for Friedrich Wyneken, Pastor and Missionary**

Is His love like a burden or has His yoke become too heavy? Do you want to once again depend on the world and your own righteousness? You say: “Oh no, no, but my heart is weak and doubtful, and sin is mighty!” Do not despair. There will be enough temptations, trials, and sin; yes, you may be overcome by your body’s weakness. But you are not depending on your own heart but on your Jesus, who saves you from your sins and gives you renewed mercy in Word and Sacrament. Forgiveness of sin surrounds you like the air; yes, it is spread out around you like the sky. He is faithful, the one who has called you. He will do it for you. You just hold on to His Word and Sacrament. Do not forsake prayer. Death might meet up with you whenever and wherever it wants. It will only lead you into the eternally new year, into the right peace and bliss. And even while you are in the throes of death, this beautiful name will lighten your way and bring you safely across:  
J E S U S!

—Friedrich Wyneken

### **Friedrich Wyneken, Pastor and Missionary**

Friedrich Wyneken is one of the founding fathers of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, along with C. F. W. Walther and Wilhelm Sihler. Born in 1810 in Germany, Wyneken came to Baltimore, Maryland, in 1838 and shortly

thereafter accepted a call to be the pastor of congregations in Friedheim and Fort Wayne, Indiana. Supported by Wilhelm Loehe's mission society, Wyneken served as an itinerant missionary in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan, particularly among Native Americans. Together with Loehe and Sihler, he founded Concordia Theological Seminary in 1846 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Wyneken later served as the second president of the LCMS during a period of significant growth (1850–64). His leadership strongly influenced the confessional character of the LCMS and its commitment to an authentic Lutheran witness.

## 5 MAY

*Frederick the Wise, Christian Ruler*

### Writing for Frederick the Wise, Christian Ruler

High-born Prince, kind, dear brother and kinsman. Herewith I send you a book written by Dr. Martin Luther, in which you will find many wonderful things. God Almighty grant that it turn out well, for truly things are coming to light which many people conceal; may God Almighty vouchsafe to us poor sinners that we be improved and not made worse thereby. I would not keep this from you, since you asked me to send you whatever Dr. Luther writes, and I am always willing to serve you. I am glad the books I sent pleased you and my [nephew]. Please tell the dear boy [Johann Frederick] that I am informed that the cardinals and Romanists with their followers are taking counsel against Dr. Luther to

put him under the ban of the Empire and persecute him to the uttermost. But there are many other people who wish him well. God grant graciously that it be for our good.

—Handwritten letter from Frederick the Wise to his brother, Duke John, August 25, 1520

### Frederick the Wise, Christian Ruler

Frederick the Wise, elector of Saxony from 1486 to 1525, was Martin Luther's sovereign in the early years of the Reformation. Were it not for Frederick, there might not have been a Lutheran Reformation. Born in Torgau, Germany, in 1463, Frederick became so well known for his skill in political diplomacy and his sense of justice and fairness that he was called "the Wise" by his subjects. Although he never met Luther, Frederick repeatedly protected and provided for him. In all likelihood, he saved the reformer from a martyr's fate when he refused the pope's demand to extradite Luther to Rome for a heresy trial in 1518. When Emperor Charles V declared Luther an outlaw in 1521 at the Diet of Worms, Frederick provided sanctuary for Luther at Wartburg Castle. On his deathbed, Frederick received the Lord's Supper in both kinds—a clear confession of the evangelical faith.

## 7 MAY

*C. F. W. Walther, Theologian*

### Writing for C. F. W. Walther, Theologian

Arise, you Lutherans of America! Arise! Let us use the glorious freedom that we taste here in America to the end that the

old banner of confession, which in our old fatherland lay in musty [ruin], be hoisted here again. And let us gather around this banner as a faithful and courageous people of confession. Let us renew today the old oath of loyalty that we Lutherans have recited already at our confirmation. Let our teachers in church and school be sworn to that oath! Let us examine and correct everything, which we hear and read, next to God's Word, according to this confession. Finally, let us only work and fight in rank and file with those who are prepared to follow this banner. The storms of the world and the false brothers may rain upon us. They will not rend asunder our banner, but only more fully and broadly unfurl it before the eyes of all the world. In the Old World, my brothers, it is evident that the sun, which once rose in Augsburg and upon the Bergen Cloister, the sun of the pure Gospel, is setting. Many true Lutherans in the Old World look with longing and hope to our young American Lutheran Church, which though it is small, is free. And because she is free, she is, before others, called to salvage and rescue the pure Gospel here in the New World in these last times, that holy relic entrusted to our Church. O arise! Arise, American Lutheran Zion, and let there be light! You, her watchmen, forward! Lay hold the holy banner and hold it high and swing it joyously! All of you, you children of this Zion, man and wife, old and young, follow those who show themselves true bearers of the flag! O take heart and be joyful! The Lord, who is a God of truth, is with us! By that sign we shall conquer, though all powers of darkness in midnight hour plot against us and rise against us on the battlefield. The battle will rage hot and ever hotter!

Finally, we, persistent to the end—and grant this to us Jesus Christ, Thou Leader in the fight!—we will be taken in triumph into the congregation above, to the eternal festival of jubilation. Amen.

—C. F. W. Walther

### C. F. W. Walther, Theologian

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (1811–87), the father of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, emigrated from Saxony, Germany, with other Lutherans in 1839 and settled in Missouri. He served as pastor of several congregations in St. Louis, founded Concordia Seminary, and in 1847 was instrumental in the formation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (then called the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States). Walther served as the Synod's first president from 1847 to 1850 and again from 1864 to 1878. Walther worked tirelessly to promote confessional Lutheran teaching and doctrinal agreement among all Lutherans in the United States. He was a prolific writer and speaker, and among his most influential works are *Church and Ministry* and *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*.

## 9 MAY

*Job*

### Writing for Job

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there,  
and backward, but I do not perceive him;  
on the left hand when he is working, I do not  
behold him;  
he turns to the right hand, but I do not  
see him.

But he knows the way that I take;  
 when he has tried me, I shall come out as  
 gold.

My foot has held fast to his steps;  
 I have kept his way and have not turned  
 aside.

I have not departed from the commandment  
 of his lips;

I have treasured the words of his mouth  
 more than my portion of food.

But he is unchangeable, and who can turn  
 him back?

What he desires, that he does.

For he will complete what he appoints for  
 me,

and many such things are in his mind.

Therefore I am terrified at his presence;  
 when I consider, I am in dread of him.

God has made my heart faint;

the Almighty has terrified me;

yet I am not silenced because of the darkness,  
 nor because thick darkness covers my  
 face.

—Job 23:8–17

## Job

Job was a blameless and upright man  
 who came from Uz (Job 1:1), a land northeast  
 of Canaan. The Book of Job examines the  
 depths of his faith, which was severely tested  
 through the sufferings God permitted.

Despite the sudden death of his ten children  
 and the loss of all his wealth and his health,  
 Job refused to curse God, saying: “Naked I  
 came from my mother’s womb, and naked  
 shall I return; the LORD gave, and the LORD  
 has taken away; blessed be the name of the  
 LORD” (Job 1:21). Still, in the midst of his  
 tribulations Job questioned the meaning and  
 purpose of suffering to the point of asserting  
 his own righteousness (Job 34:5–6). Finally,  
 the Lord revealed that a man cannot know

the mysteries of God (Job 38–41). Job’s  
 faith in his Redeemer and the resurrection  
 prevailed (Job 19:25–27). In the end, the Lord  
 restored Job’s wealth and blessed him with  
 another seven sons and three daughters.

## 11 MAY

*Cyril and Methodius,  
 Missionaries to the Slavs*

### Writing for Cyril and Methodius, Missionaries to the Slavs

There is no other sign by which you can  
 know where Christ and his church may be  
 found than this one sure sign, this star, the  
 holy gospel; every other sign is false and fails.  
 Where the gospel is preached, there this star  
 shines brightly, there without a doubt Christ  
 is present, there you will assuredly find the  
 church, whether it be in Turkey, in Russia, in  
 Bohemia, or anywhere else. It is impossible  
 that God’s word should be proclaimed  
 and God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit not  
 be present. Likewise it is impossible that  
 God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, or  
 anything blessed should be present where  
 God’s word is not proclaimed, even if they  
 were to perform every imaginable miracle;  
 nothing but the Herodists and the devil’s  
 realm can be present there. It has always  
 been clear that the pope and the clergy do  
 not proclaim God’s word, but are merely  
 concerned about doctrines of men.

—Martin Luther

## Cyril and Methodius, Missionaries to the Slavs

Cyril (AD 826–69) and Methodius (c. 815–85) were brothers who came from a Greek family in Thessalonica and were both ordained as priests. After ordination, Cyril became librarian at the Church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) in Constantinople. In AD 862, the brothers were sent by the emperor as missionaries to what is now the Czech republic, where they taught in the native Slavic tongue. Cyril invented the alphabet known today as “Cyrillic,” which provided a written language for the liturgy and Scriptures for the Slavic peoples. This use of the vernacular established an important principle for evangelical missions.

### 21 MAY

*Constantine, Emperor,  
and Helena, his mother*

## Writing for Constantine, Emperor, and Helena, his mother

We have been informed that Constantine was led to honor the Christian religion through a combination of events, particularly when a sign from heaven appeared.

When he first decided to go to war against Maxentius, he was plagued with doubts about how he would go about fighting the war and where he could look for help. In the midst of his doubt and worry he received a vision and saw the cross shining in heaven. He was amazed at the sight, but holy angels who were standing by exclaimed, “Constantine! By this sign, conquer!” And it is said that Christ Himself appeared to him,

showed him the symbol of the cross, and commanded him to construct one like it and to use it as his help in battle, and it would ensure his victory.

Eusebius, surnamed Pamphilus, affirms that he heard the emperor declare with an oath, as the sun was on the point of inclining about the middle of the day, that he and the soldiers who were with him saw in heaven the trophy of the cross composed of light and encircled by the following words: “By this sign, conquer.” . . .

While he was reflecting on what this could mean, night came. When he fell asleep, Christ appeared with the sign that he had seen in heaven and commanded him to construct a representation of the symbol and to use it as his help in battle. There was nothing further to be said, for the emperor clearly understood the necessity of serving God.

At daybreak he called together the priests of Christ and questioned them concerning their doctrines. They opened the Sacred Scriptures and explained the truths relative to Christ and showed him from the prophets how the signs that had been predicted had been fulfilled. The sign that had appeared to him was the symbol, they said, of the victory over hell, for Christ came among men, was stretched upon the cross, died, and returned to life the third day. On this account, they said, there was hope that at the end of the present age there would be a resurrection from the dead.

—*The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen*

## Emperor Constantine, Christian Ruler, and Helena, Mother of Constantine

Constantine I served as Roman emperor from AD 306 to 337. During his reign, the

persecution of Christians was forbidden by the Edict of Milan in AD 313, and, ultimately, the faith gained full imperial support. Constantine took an active interest in the life and teachings of the Church and called the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, at which orthodox Christianity was defined and defended. His mother, Helena (ca. AD 255–329), strongly influenced Constantine. Her great interest in locating the holy sites of the Christian faith led her to become one of the first Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. Her research led to the identification of biblical locations in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and beyond, which are still maintained as places of worship today.

## 24 MAY

*Esther*

### Writing for Esther

Why did Queen Esther expose herself to death and not fear the wrath of a fierce king? Was it not to save her people from death, an act both seemly and virtuous? The king of Persia himself also, though fierce and proud, yet thought it seemly to show honor to the man who had given information about a plot which had been laid against himself, to save a free people from slavery, to snatch them from death, and not to spare him who had pressed on such unseemly plans. So finally he handed over to the gallows the man that stood second to himself, and whom he counted chief among all his friends, because he considered that he had dishonored him by his false counsels.

For that commendable friendship which maintains virtue is to be preferred most certainly to wealth or honors or power.

—Ambrose

### Esther

Esther is the heroine of the biblical book that bears her name. Her Jewish name was Hadassah, which means “myrtle.” Her beauty, charm, and courage served her well as queen to King Ahasuerus. In that role, she was able to save her people from the mass extermination that Haman, the king’s chief advisor, had planned (2:19–4:17). Esther’s efforts to uncover the plot resulted in the hanging of Haman on the very same gallows that he had built for Mordecai, her uncle and guardian. Following this, the king named Mordecai minister of state in Haman’s place. This story is an example of how God intervenes on behalf of His people to deliver them from evil, as here through Esther He preserved the Old Testament people through whom the Messiah would come.

## 25 MAY

*Bede the Venerable, Theologian*

### Writing for Bede the Venerable, Theologian

Here lieth Bede, his country’s pride and light,  
 The firm maintainer of all law and right.  
 To wisdom’s path, e’en from his youth  
 inclin’d,  
 Far spread the radiance of his heavenly mind.  
 His earliest vow to God, his constant care  
 Was learning, preaching, meditation, prayer.  
 His sword was Scripture, in these holy arms

He saved Christ's pious flock from all alarms:  
 None in his presence suffered hunger's call,  
 His words were heavenly comfort to them all.  
 A pleasing perfume in this church is found,  
 Which breathes refreshing gales on all  
 around,  
 And now the world has lost this brilliant  
 light,  
 And sinks enveloped in the shades of night:  
 Whilst he in radiant clothes ascends above  
 To dwell for ever in the realms of love.

—*Unknown*

### **Bede the Venerable, Theologian**

Bede (AD 673–735) was the last of the Early Church fathers and the first to compile the history of the English church. Born in Northumbria, Bede's parents placed him in a monastery in northern England at the age of seven. He rarely left the monastery and devoted the rest of his life to teaching and writing. The most learned man of his time, he was a prolific writer of history, whose careful use of sources provided a model for historians in the Middle Ages. Known best for his book *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, he was also a profound interpreter of Scripture; his commentaries are still fresh today. His most famous disciple, Cuthbert, reported that Bede was working on a translation of John's Gospel into English when death came and that he died with the words of the Gloria Patri on his lips. He received the title "Venerable" within two generations of his death and is buried in Durham Cathedral as one of England's greatest saints.

## **31 MAY**

### *The Visitation*

#### **Writing for The Visitation**

In accordance with this design, Mary the Virgin is found obedient, saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." But Eve was disobedient; for she did not obey when as yet she was a virgin. And even as she, having indeed a husband, Adam, but being nevertheless as yet a virgin . . . having become disobedient, was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race; so also did Mary, having a man betrothed [to her], and being nevertheless a virgin, by yielding obedience, became the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race. And on this account does the law term a woman betrothed to a man, the wife of him who had betrothed her, although she was as yet a virgin; thus indicating the back-reference from Mary to Eve, because what is joined together could not otherwise be put asunder than by inversion of the process by which these bonds of union had arisen; so that the former ties be cancelled by the latter, that the latter may set the former again at liberty. . . . For the Lord, having been born "the First-begotten of the dead," and receiving into His bosom the ancient fathers, has regenerated them into the life of God, He having been made himself the beginning of those that live, as Adam became the beginning of those who die. Wherefore also Luke, commencing the genealogy with the Lord, carried it back to Adam, indicating that it was He who regenerated them into the Gospel of life, and

not they Him. And thus also it was that the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith.

—Irenaeus

### The Visitation

John the Baptizer and Jesus, the two great figures of salvation history, now come together in the visit to Elizabeth by the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:39–45), both of whom conceived their children under miraculous circumstances. Thus John is brought into the presence of Jesus while they are still in their mothers' wombs. This presence of the Lord causes a response by the child John as he leaps in Elizabeth's womb. John's response to the presence of Jesus, the Messiah, foreshadows John's own role as forerunner. Already now, a new creation is beginning, and a baby still in the womb hails the new creation's inception. Foreshadowed in John's leap are the miracles of Jesus, who will cause all creation to leap at His presence: "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them" (Luke 7:22). The incarnate presence of the Messiah also evokes a response from Elizabeth, who proclaims Mary's blessedness. Mary's Magnificat (1:46–55) provides the theological significance of this meeting as Mary sums up her place in salvation history. Mary's song is a hymn to God for His gracious gifts to the least in this world, whom He has lifted up out of lowliness solely because of His grace and mercy.

## 1 JUNE

*Justin, Martyr*

### Writing for Justin, Martyr

No one may share the Eucharist with us unless he believes that what we teach is true, unless he is washed in the regenerating waters of Baptism for the remission of his sins, and unless he lives in accordance with the principles given us by Christ. We do not consume the eucharistic bread and wine as if it were ordinary food and drink, for we have been taught that as Jesus Christ our Savior became a man of flesh and blood by the power of the Word of God, so also the food that our flesh and blood assimilates for its nourishment becomes the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus by the power of His own words contained in the prayer of thanksgiving. The apostles, in their recollections, which are called Gospels, handed down to us what Jesus commanded them to do. They tell us that He took bread, gave thanks, and said: "Do this in memory of Me. This is My body." In the same way He took the cup, He gave thanks, and said: "This is My blood." The Lord gave this command to them alone. . . .

Ever since then we have constantly reminded one another of these things. The rich among us help the poor, and we are always united. For all that we receive we praise the Creator of the universe through His Son, Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit. On Sunday we have a common assembly of all our members, whether they live in the city or the outlying districts. The recollections of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as there is time.

When the reader has finished, the president of the assembly speaks to us; he urges everyone to imitate the examples of virtue we have heard in the readings. Then we all stand up together and pray. On the conclusion of our prayer, bread and wine and water are brought. The president offers prayers and gives thanks to the best of his ability, and the people give assent by saying, "Amen." The Eucharist is distributed, everyone present communes, and the deacons take it to those who are absent. The wealthy, if they wish, may make a contribution, and they themselves decide the amount. The collection is placed in the custody of the president, who uses it to help the orphans and widows and all who for any reason are in distress, whether because they are sick, in prison, or away from home. In a word, he takes care of all who are in need. We hold our common assembly on Sunday because it is the first day of the week, the day on which God put darkness and chaos to flight and created the world, and because on that same day our Savior, Jesus Christ, rose from the dead. For He was crucified on Friday, and on Sunday He appeared to His apostles and disciples and taught them the things that we have passed on for your consideration.

—Justin Martyr

### Justin, Martyr

Born at the beginning of the second century, Justin was raised in a pagan family. He was a student of philosophy who converted to the Christian faith and became a teacher in Ephesus and Rome. After refusing to make pagan sacrifices, he was arrested, tried, and executed, along with six other believers. The official Roman court proceedings of his trial before Rusticius, a Roman prelate,

document his confession of faith. The account of his martyrdom became a source of great encouragement to the early Christian community. Much of what we know of early liturgical practice comes from Justin.

## 5 JUNE

*Boniface of Mainz, Missionary to Germany*

### Writing for Boniface of Mainz, Missionary to Germany

Boniface to the English, asking prayers for the conversion of the Saxons:

With humble prayer, we beseech you, brethren, of your charity to remember our lowly selves in your prayers, that we may escape the cunning snares of the devil and the buffetings of evil men, that the Word of the Lord may prosper and be glorified. We beg you to be instant in prayer that God and our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, may convert the hearts of the pagan Saxons to the faith, may make them repent of the devilish errors in which they are entangled and unite them to the children of Mother Church. Have pity on them, because their repeated cry is: "We are of one and the same blood and bone." Remember that we go the way of all flesh and in hell no man praises the Lord nor can death honor Him. Be it known that in this undertaking I have the agreement and support and blessing of two pontiffs of the Roman See. Act, then, on this prayer of mine, that your reward among the angels of heaven may be manifest and enlarged. May the Almighty Creator keep your unity and common bond of love in force for evermore.

—Boniface of Mainz

## Boniface of Mainz

Boniface was born in the late seventh century in England. Though he was educated, became a monk, and was ordained as a presbyter in England, he was inspired by the example of others to become a missionary. Upon receiving a papal commission in AD 719 to work in Germany, Boniface devoted himself to planting, organizing, and reforming churches and monasteries in Hesse, Thuringia, and Bavaria. After becoming an archbishop, Boniface was assigned to the See of Mainz in AD 743. Ten years later, he resigned his position to engage in mission work in the Netherlands. On June 5, 754, while awaiting a group of converts for confirmation, Boniface and his companions were murdered by a band of pagans. Boniface is known as the apostle and missionary to the Germans.

11 JUNE

*St. Barnabas, Apostle*

### Writing for St. Barnabas, Apostle

When the Lord says, “You shall love the Lord your God, from all your heart and from all your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself,” let the faithful soul put on the unfading love of its Author and Ruler and subject itself also entirely to His will in whose works and judgments true justice and tender-hearted compassion never fail. For though a man be worn out with labor and many misfortunes, there is good reason for him to endure all these things, in the knowledge that adversity will either prove him good or make him better. But this godly

love cannot be perfect unless a man love his neighbor also. Under which name must be included not only those who are connected with us by friendship or community, but absolutely all men, with whom we have a common nature, whether they be enemies or friends, slaves or free. For the one Maker fashioned us, the one Creator breathed life into us; we all enjoy the same sky and air, the same days and nights, and, though some be good, others bad, some righteous, others unrighteous, yet God is bountiful to all, kind to all, as Paul and Barnabas said to the Lycaonians concerning God’s providence: “who in generations gone by allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet He left Himself not without witness, doing them good, giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling our hearts with food and gladness.” But the wide extent of Christian grace has given us yet even greater reasons for loving our neighbor, which, reaching to all parts of the whole world, looks down on no one and teaches that no one is to be neglected. And He is absolutely right when He commands us to love our enemies and to pray to Him for our persecutors, who, daily grafting shoots of the wild olive from among all nations upon the holy branches of His own olive, makes men reconciled instead of enemies, adopted sons instead of strangers, just instead of ungodly, “that every knee may bow in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.”

—Leo the Great

## St. Barnabas, Apostle

St. Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus who sold some land and gave the proceeds to the early Christian community in Jerusalem (Acts 4:36–37). St. Paul informs us that he was a cousin of John Mark (Colossians 4:10). Barnabas was sent by the Jerusalem Church to oversee the young Church in Antioch (Acts 11:22). While there, he went to Tarsus and brought Paul back to Antioch to help him (Acts 11:25–26). It was this Church in Antioch that commissioned and sent Barnabas and Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:2–3). When it was time for the second missionary journey, however, Barnabas and Paul disagreed about taking along John Mark. Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus; Paul took Silas and headed north through Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:36–41). Nothing more is known of the activities of Barnabas, except that he was apparently known to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 9:6). Tradition relates that Barnabas died a martyr's death in Cyprus by being stoned.

## 12 JUNE

*The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, AD 325*

### Writing for The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, AD 325

Forasmuch as the great and holy Synod, which was assembled at Nicaea through the grace of Christ and our most religious Sovereign Constantine, who brought us together from our several provinces and cities, has considered matters which concern the faith of the Church, it seemed to us to

be necessary that certain things should be communicated from us to you in writing, so that you might have the means of knowing what has been rejected and investigated, and also what has been decreed and confirmed.

First, then, in the presence of our most religious Sovereign Constantine, investigation was made of matters concerning the impiety and transgression of Arius and his adherents. And it was unanimously decreed that he and his impious opinion should be anathematized, together with the blasphemous words and speculations in which he indulged, blaspheming the Son of God, and saying that He is from things that are not, and that before He was begotten He was not, and that there was a time when He was not, and that the Son of God is by His free will capable of vice and virtue; saying also that He is a creature. All these things the holy Synod has anathematized, not even enduring to hear his impious doctrine and madness and blasphemous words.

—*The Synodal Letter* from the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea

### The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, AD 325

The first Council of Nicaea was convened in the early summer of AD 325 by Roman Emperor Constantine at what is today Iznik, Turkey. The emperor presided at the opening of the council. The council ruled against the Arians, who taught that Jesus was not the eternal Son of God but was created by the Father and was called Son of God because of His righteousness. The chief opponents of the Arians were Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and his deacon, Athanasius.

The council confessed the eternal divinity of Jesus and adopted the earliest version of the Nicene Creed, which in its entirety was adopted at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381.

## 14 JUNE

*Elisha*

### Writing for Elisha

When Elijah went up to heaven, he left nothing to his disciple save his cloak. “By the help of this,” said he, “I have wrestled with the devil, and taking this, be armed against him!” For poverty is a powerful weapon, an unassailable retreat, an unshaken fortress! Elisha received the cloak as the greatest inheritance—more precious than gold. And thenceforth that Elisha was a twofold person: an Elias above and an Elias below! I know you consider that just person blessed, and you want to be like that person. What, then, if I show you that all among us, who are initiated, receive something far greater than he did? For Elijah left a cloak to his disciple, but the Son of God ascending left to us His own flesh! Elias indeed cast off his mantle before he went up; but Christ left it behind for our sakes, and yet retained it when He ascended. Let us not, then, be cast down. Let us not lament nor fear the difficulty of the times, for He who did not refuse to pour out His blood for all and has allowed us to partake of His flesh and of His blood again, what will He refuse to do for our safety? Confident then in these hopes, let us pray to Him continually.

—John Chrysostom

### Elisha

Elisha, son of Shaphat of the tribe of Issachar, was the prophet of God to the northern kingdom of Israel around 849–786 BC. Upon seeing his mentor, Elijah, taken up into heaven, Elisha assumed the prophetic office and took up the mantle of his predecessor. Like Elijah, Elisha played an active role in political affairs. He also performed many miracles, such as curing the Syrian army commander Naaman of his leprosy (2 Kings 5) and restoring life to the son of a Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:8–37). A vocal opponent of Baal worship, Elisha lived up to his name, which means “my God is salvation.”

All depends on our possessing  
God's abundant grace and blessing,  
Though all earthly wealth depart.  
They who trust with faith unshaken  
By their God are not forsaken  
And will keep a dauntless heart.

He who to this day has fed me  
And to many joys has led me  
Is and ever shall be mine.  
He who ever gently schools me,  
He who daily guides and rules me  
Will remain my help divine.

Well He knows what best to grant me;  
All the longing hopes that haunt me,  
Joy and sorrow, have their day.  
I shall doubt His wisdom never;  
As God wills, so be it ever;  
I commit to Him my way.  
—*LSB* 732:1-2, 5

PRAYERS,  
INTERCESSIONS,

*and*

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# DAILY PRAYER FOR THE CHRISTIAN

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## PRAYER ON SUNDAY

O Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, today all Christendom celebrates the day on which You rose from the dead. You, who are the Light come to lighten the darkness, let the sun of Your mercy rise upon all the services of Your people. Grant that Your Word may be rightly preached with power from the Holy Spirit and without fear of those who would oppose it. Bring about true repentance in all who are Yours and fill them with the holy faith, which is the salvation of their souls. Listen favorably to all our prayers and bring them before the Father for the sake of Your holy wounds.

O Merciful Lord, where You in the mystery of the Sacrament of Your body and blood make an entrance among Your people, there grant that all the faithful may bow in holy fear and humility before You, and that all whom You Yourself feed may receive the sacred gift not impenitently to their judgment, but as a medicine of eternal life. Look not upon the sins we commit against You this day, and bring to nothing all the plans of the evil foe. Let the Last Day come soon, so that we, released from all strife, may behold You with all saints and angels face-to-face and sing our praises to You better than we are now able.

Amen. Yes, come Lord Jesus! Amen.

## PRAYER ON MONDAY

O Lord, merciful and holy Bridegroom; we grieve the fall of Your Church. It is our fault that the beauty of Your Bride is no longer recognized. Therefore we pray You: give and increase in us faith, love, and hope in You; root out of us all sins and vice, all strife, all disbelief, all error and heresy; rebuke the erring, convert the unbelievers, bring the rebellious again to the unity of the Christian Church and show them the light of Your truth. Protect our shepherd from all danger of body and soul. Bless all pastors and those who administer in the Church in the building of Your congregation; grant them success in all things. Equip Your whole Church with the power and proof of the holy faith. Stand by Your witnesses among the nations and further the course of Your Gospel in all the world.

Fill all government with the fear of You and let their ruling serve to foster and preserve peace. Have mercy on our people and country. Let the youth be brought up in discipline and in a right knowledge of You, so that they may recognize Your law and the way of Your salvation. Give constancy and loyalty to all pious teachers.

Comfort all the troubled and sorrowful. Impart health of body and soul to the sick. Grant to all pregnant women, according to Your mercy, a happy result in their childbearing. To the needy give bodily and spiritually according to Your good pleasure. Let those who travel be commended to the protection of Your holy angels. And be a strong help to all who need You. For the sake of Your holy wounds, O Jesus. Amen.

## PRAYER ON TUESDAY

Almighty God, heavenly Father; we praise Your fathomless mercy, with which You take pity on sinful men. All the prophets and apostles preach this to us in Your Holy Word.

Let our hope not be put to shame when we pray to You for all who suffer at this time. For behold, the evil foe has become mighty, and the great ones of this world rule often with unrighteousness. O God, who in former times caused Your saints to overcome injustice, strengthen also today all who stand in need of Your help. Grant that all prisoners of war—held as slaves and sacrifices of earthly wrath—may return to their home. Stand by all refugees and homeless people, and be their justice. Be a father to the widows and orphans with Your strong protection.

Go through bars and fences to those who are imprisoned for the sake of Your name; strengthen them for a good witness, and let them not waver in the confession of Your name. Teach us through their example, and the example of so many holy martyrs, to be ever watchful of the confession of your Son's name. Let us not be put to shame when the evil foe lays his hand on us. But if it is Your will that we be persecuted for confessing Jesus as our Lord and only Savior, then support us in Your grace that we may withstand all trials, and grant us peaceful rest; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## PRAYER ON WEDNESDAY

*When used in group settings,  
the responses are set in bold type.*

O Lord, **have mercy.**  
O Christ, **have mercy.**  
O Lord, **have mercy.**  
O Christ, **hear us.**  
God the Father in heaven, **have mercy.**  
God the Son, Redeemer  
of the world, **have mercy.**  
God the Holy Spirit, **have mercy.**  
Be gracious to us. **Spare all  
the dying.**

From all sin, from all evil;  
From the devil's might;  
From the devil's wiles;  
From Your wrath and  
from hell's torment;  
From sudden and evil death;  
**Good Lord, deliver them.**

By the mystery of Your holy  
incarnation, by Your holy nativity;  
By Your agony and bloody sweat;  
By Your cross and passion;  
By Your precious death and burial;  
By Your glorious resurrection and ascension;  
And by the grace of the Holy Spirit,  
the Comforter:  
**Help them, good Lord.**

In the hour of death;  
On the Day of Judgment:  
**Help them, good Lord.**

We poor sinners implore You  
**to hear us, good Lord.**  
To comfort all the dying;  
To forgive them all their sins; to lead them  
out of this misery into eternal life:  
**We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
**we implore You to hear us.**

Christ the Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sin of the world,  
**have mercy upon them.**

Christ the Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sin of the world,  
**have mercy upon them.**

Christ the Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sin of the world,  
**grant them Your peace.**

O Christ, **hear us.**  
O Lord, **have mercy.**  
O Christ, **have mercy.**  
O Lord, **have mercy.**  
**Amen.**

Holy Lord God, holy and mighty God,  
holy and most merciful Redeemer;  
God eternal, leave us not to bitter death.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

Holy Lord God, holy and mighty God,  
holy and most merciful Redeemer;  
God eternal, allow us not to lose hope  
in the face of death and hell.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

Holy Lord God, holy and mighty God, holy  
and most merciful Redeemer;  
God eternal, keep us steadfast  
in the true faith.  
**Lord, have mercy.**  
**Amen.**

## PRAYER ON THURSDAY

O Lord Jesus Christ, true King of heaven and earth; You promised to Your Church that the gates of hell would not prevail against her, and You still cause Your Word to be preached and Your holy Sacraments to be administered among us. But ah!, O Lord, the sins of Your people obscure the majesty of Your Bride. Your holy vineyard is trampled and Your blessed sacrifice stands neglected. Many think themselves strong and despise the life-giving food that You have ordained for Your people, for the forgiveness of their sins.

Pardon all our arrogance and do not come to us in wrath to remove the lamp of Your Word from before our eyes! O Lord, we pray You: visit this vine, which You once established for Yourself, and renew us with the sun of Your mercy and the water of eternal life.

Give us a great hunger for the food of Your true body and blood, and let all Your faithful people ever be found in the Apostles' doctrine, in the fellowship, in the breaking of Your bread, and in the prayers.

We implore You, O Lord, for our altar, that it may ever be a place where the medicine of eternal life, the forgiveness of our sins, strengthens us in body and soul; that disbelief and impenitence may stay far from all who come there so that they may not eat and drink to their own judgment.

O Eternal High Priest, let the fruit of Your Spirit grow in us, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and chastity. Cause us to live in holy conduct toward one another to the glory of Your holy name, here in time and hereafter in eternity; for You live and reign with the Father and the same Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## PRAYER ON FRIDAY

Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, we thank you . . . that You have redeemed us poor and condemned creatures not by any of our works, merit, or worthiness, but by Your holy suffering, death, and shedding of blood. O Lord, Your suffering was great, Your torment was heavy; we cannot comprehend how many Your stripes, how deep Your wounds, or the bitterness and painfulness of Your death! How inexpressible is Your love that reconciled us to Your heavenly Father. In great fear of death, You sweat blood on the Mount of Olives, drops of blood that fell upon the earth, and there, abandoned by all Your disciples, You willingly gave Yourself into the hands of those who led You mercilessly, bound hard and cruel, from one unjust judge to another. You were falsely accused and condemned, spit upon, scoffed, and struck in the face with fists. For the sake of our misdeeds, You were hit, whipped, crowned with thorns, and treated wretchedly—like a worm and not a man. You were despised and rejected by men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief, so that even a heathen heart took pity and said, “Behold the man!” For the sake of our sin You were counted a sinner and hung up between two evildoers as a curse. You were pierced in hands and feet with nails and in Your highest thirst You were given vinegar and gall to drink. Finally, in great pain, You gave up Your spirit so that You could pay our debt and we could be healed by Your wounds.

O Lord Jesus Christ, for this and all Your other suffering and pain, we give You thanks and praise. We pray You, let Your holy, bitter suffering and death not be lost on us, but grant that at all times this may be our comfort, and that we may boast in it; and

that as we ponder it, all evil desire in us may be snuffed out and subdued, and all virtue may be implanted and increased, so that we, having died to sin, may live in righteousness, following the example You have left us, walking in Your footsteps, enduring evil with patience, and suffering injustice with a good conscience. Amen.

## PRAYER ON SATURDAY

Lord God, heavenly Father, once again a week comes to its end. Forgive us for having sinned again this week. We pray You not to look upon our guilt: forgive us every sin of thought, word, and deed; forgive our inner blindness, disbelief, doubt, feeble-mindedness, impatience, arrogance, evil desires, lust, secret envy, hate, resentment, and our other sins.

Redeem us by Your mercy. We know that a single sin eternally destroys our fellowship with You. We know that we have eternally earned Your wrath. We know that by our sin we are not worthy to be named Your children. But our hope is not in our works; our hope is found in Your grace alone, O God. We pray You to forgive us for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son. Through Him, grant us the power to hate our sins, so that we may lead a life well-pleasing to You in true humility and in the knowledge of Your holy will. O Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Let the coming Sunday be a blessing for all Christians and for me. Waken in us a hunger for Your Word and Sacrament. Prepare our hearts that we may take part in the eternal liturgy sung before Your throne, and grant that in the Sacrament we may join the never-ending feast, until that final day comes. Hear our prayer for the sake of the Lamb, Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.



# THE LITANY

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The name “Litany” derives from the Greek word for prayer. In essence it is an explanation of the Kyrie (“Lord, have mercy.”). Our Litany is based on Martin Luther’s revision of the Great Litany (1529) and follows the English translation made by Thomas Cranmer (1544). Purged of the invocation of saints and other errors, the Litany stands as a great and comprehensive pattern of prayer for the Church, the world, and for all sorts and conditions of people.

The Litany may be used as a private devotion or as a prayer form for meetings and other church gatherings. It may replace the prayers in the Daily Office (Matins, Vespers, and so on). The Litany is particularly appropriate for use in penitential times, whether seasons (Lent, Advent) or days (Ember Days or special days of repentance and prayer).

*When used in group settings, the responses are set in **bold type**.*

O Lord, **have mercy.**  
O Lord, **have mercy.**  
O Christ, **have mercy.**  
O Lord, **have mercy.**  
O Christ, **hear us.**  
God the Father in heaven, **have mercy.**  
God the Son, Redeemer  
of the world, **have mercy.**  
God the Holy Spirit, **have mercy.**  
Be gracious to us. **Spare us, good Lord.**  
Be gracious to us. **Help us, good Lord.**  
From all sin, from all error, from all evil;  
From the crafts and assaults of the devil;  
from sudden and evil death;  
From pestilence and famine; from war and  
bloodshed; from sedition and from  
rebellion;  
From lightning and tempest; from all  
calamity by fire and water; and from  
everlasting death:  
**Good Lord, deliver us.**

By the mystery of Your holy incarnation;  
by Your holy nativity;  
By Your baptism, fasting, and temptation;  
by Your agony and bloody sweat; by  
Your cross and Passion; by Your  
precious death and burial;  
By Your glorious resurrection and ascension;  
and by the coming of the Holy Spirit,  
the Comforter:

**Help us, good Lord.**

In all time of our tribulation;  
in all time of our prosperity;  
in the hour of death;  
and in the day of judgment:  
**Help us, good Lord.**

We poor sinners implore You  
**to hear us, O Lord.**

To rule and govern Your holy Christian Church; to preserve all pastors and ministers of Your Church in the true knowledge and understanding of Your wholesome Word and to sustain them in holy living;

To put an end to all schisms and causes of offense; to bring into the way of truth all who have erred and are deceived;

To beat down Satan under our feet; to send faithful laborers into Your harvest; and to accompany Your Word with Your grace and Spirit:  
**We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

To raise those that fall and to strengthen those that stand; and to comfort and help the weakhearted and the distressed:  
**We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

To give to all peoples concord and peace; to preserve our land from discord and strife; to give our country Your protection in every time of need;

To direct and defend our *president/queen/king* and all in authority; to bless and protect our magistrates and all our people;

To watch over and help all who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation; to protect and guide all who travel;

To grant all women with child, and all mothers with infant children, increasing happiness in their blessings; to defend all orphans and widows and provide for them;

To strengthen and keep all sick persons and young children; to free those in bondage; and to have mercy on us all:  
**We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

To forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers and to turn their hearts; to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth; and graciously to hear our prayers:  
**We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

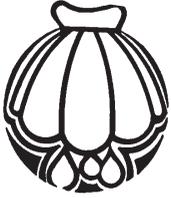
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
**we implore You to hear us.**

Christ, the Lamb of God,  
 who takes away the sin of the world,  
**have mercy.**

Christ, the Lamb of God,  
 who takes away the sin of the world,  
**have mercy.**

Christ, the Lamb of God,  
 who takes away the sin of the world,  
**grant us Your peace.**

O Christ, **hear us.**  
 O Lord, **have mercy.**  
 O Christ, **have mercy.**  
 O Lord, **have mercy. Amen.**



# PRAYERS FOR THE BAPTISMAL LIFE

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## Morning

Faithful God, whose mercies are new to us every morning, we humbly pray that You would look upon us in mercy and renew us by Your Holy Spirit. Keep safe our going out and our coming in, and let Your blessing remain with us throughout this day. Preserve us in Your righteousness, and grant us a portion in that eternal life which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. (168)

## Thanksgiving in the morning

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new unto us every morning, and though we have not deserved Your goodness, You abundantly provide for all our wants of body and soul. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness toward us, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (169)

## Protection during the day (Collect for Grace)

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, You have safely brought us to the beginning of this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power, and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (170)

## Evening

Merciful Father, whose guiding hand has brought us to the completion of this day, we humbly pray You to stay with us and shelter us in quiet hours of the night that we, who are wearied by the changes and chances of this passing world, may rest in Your changeless peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (171)

## Thanksgiving at end of day

Gracious Lord, we give You thanks for the day, especially for the good we were permitted to give and to receive. The day is now past, and we commit it to You. We entrust to You the night and rest in Your peace, for You are our help, and You neither slumber nor sleep. Hear us for the sake of Your name. (172)

## Protection during the night

Lighten our darkness, O Lord, and by Your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of Your only Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. (173)

## At a Baptism

Almighty, everlasting God, mercifully behold Your servants whom You have made Your children through Holy Baptism. According to Your grace, grant that Your promises may be fulfilled in us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (174)

## Life as a Baptized Child of God

Merciful Father, through Holy Baptism You called us to be Your own possession. Grant that our lives may evidence the working of Your Holy Spirit in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, according to the image of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. (175)

## Anniversary of a Baptism

Gracious Lord, we give thanks that in Holy Baptism we receive forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and eternal salvation. On this baptismal anniversary, bless *name* continually by Your Word and Spirit that *he/she* may faithfully keep the covenant into which *he/she* has been called, boldly confess *his/her* Savior, and finally share with all Your saints the joys of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (176)

## Teaching the faith

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, even as You have committed the care and nurture of children to Your people, graciously enlighten those who teach and those who are committed to their instruction that they may know Your eternal truth and trust in You all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (177)

## For catechumens

Lord God, heavenly Father, in Holy Baptism You began Your good work in our catechumens, and You have blessed their instruction and training in Your Word. We implore You to pour out Your Holy Spirit on their hearts and minds so that they will truly love and revere You, confess the faith with

joy and boldness, endeavor to live according to Your commandments, and praise and glorify You as their faithful God and Lord, for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (178)

## For adult catechumens who are not baptized

Lord God, heavenly Father, You have blessed our catechumens through instruction and training in Your Word. As they prepare for Holy Baptism, we implore You to pour out Your Holy Spirit on their hearts and minds so that they will truly love and revere You, confess the faith with joy and boldness, endeavor to live according to Your commandments, and praise and glorify You as their faithful God and Lord; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (179)

## At a confirmation

Almighty God, grant that we who have been redeemed from the old life of sin through Baptism into the death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, may be renewed in Your Holy Spirit and live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (180)

## For the Holy Spirit

Almighty and everlasting God, of Your great mercy in Jesus Christ You have granted us forgiveness of sin and all things pertaining to life and godliness. Send us Your Holy Spirit that He may so rule our hearts that we, being ever mindful of Your fatherly mercy, may serve You in holiness and pureness of living and may give You continual thanks for all Your goodness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (181)

O Lord God, heavenly Father, we give

You thanks that of Your great goodness and mercy Your only-begotten Son became incarnate to redeem us from sin and everlasting death. Enlighten our hearts by Your Holy Spirit that we may forever give You thanks for Your grace and be strengthened in all times of tribulation and temptation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (182)

Almighty God, send Your Holy Spirit into our hearts that He may rule and direct us according to Your will, comfort us in all our temptations and afflictions, defend us from all error, and lead us into all truth that we, being steadfast in faith, may increase in all good works and in the end obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (183)

O Lord God, heavenly Father, You gave Your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification. By Your Holy Spirit grant us newness of life that through the power of Christ's resurrection we may dwell with Him forever; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. (184)

O Lord God, heavenly Father, by the blessed light of Your divine Word You have led us to the knowledge of Your Son. Grant us the grace of Your Holy Spirit that we may ever walk in the light of Your truth and, rejoicing with sure confidence in Christ, our Savior, be brought unto everlasting salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. (185)

Lord God, heavenly Father, let Your Holy Spirit dwell in us that He may enlighten and lead us into all truth and evermore defend us from all adversities; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (186)

## **For divine guidance**

Almighty and ever-living God, You make us both to will and to do those things that are good and acceptable in Your sight. Let Your fatherly hand ever guide us and Your Holy Spirit ever be with us to direct us in the knowledge and obedience of Your Word that we may obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (187)

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with Your most gracious favor, and further us with Your continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in You we may glorify Your holy name and finally, by Your mercy, obtain eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (188)

Almighty and everlasting God, direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of Your laws and in the works of Your commandments that through Your mighty protection we may ever be preserved in both body and soul; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (189)

## **Faith, hope, and love**

Almighty God, grant us a steadfast faith in Jesus Christ, a cheerful hope in Your mercy, and a sincere love for You and one another; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (190)

## **Thanksgiving to God**

Heavenly Father, God of all grace, govern our hearts that we may never forget Your blessings but steadfastly thank and praise You for all Your goodness in this life until, with all Your saints, we praise You eternally in Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (191)

### **Grace to use our gifts**

Lord God Almighty, even as You bless Your servants with various and unique gifts of the Holy Spirit, continue to grant us the grace to use them always to Your honor and glory; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (192)

### **For guidance in our calling**

Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (193)

### **Christian vocation**

Heavenly Father, grant Your mercy and grace to Your people in their many and various callings. Give them patience, and strengthen them in their Christian vocation of witness to the world and of service to their neighbor in Christ's name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (194)

### **Against the love of money**

Almighty God, heavenly Father, You have called us to be Your children and heirs of Your gracious promises in Christ Jesus. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may forsake all covetous desires and the inordinate love of riches. Deliver us from the pursuit of passing things that we may seek the kingdom of Your Son and trust in His righteousness and so find blessedness and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (195)

### **Proper use of wealth**

Almighty God, all that we possess is from Your loving hand. Give us grace that we may honor You with all we own, always remembering the account we must one day give to Jesus Christ, our Lord. (196)

### **Proper use of leisure**

O God, give us times of refreshment and peace in the course of this busy life. Grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds that we may be opened to the goodness of Your creation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (197)

### **Newness of life in Christ**

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put upon ourselves the armor of light now in the time of this mortal life in which Your Son, Jesus Christ, came to visit us in great humility, that in the Last Day, when He shall come again in glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (198)

### **Likeness to Christ**

O God, by the patient suffering of Your only-begotten Son You have beaten down the pride of the old enemy. Now help us, we humbly pray, rightly to treasure in our hearts all that our Lord has of His goodness borne for our sake that following His blessed example we may bear with patience all that is adverse to us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (199)

### **For steadfast faith**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, because of Your tender love toward us sinners You have given us Your Son that, believing in Him, we might have everlasting life. Continue to grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may remain steadfast in this faith to the end and finally come to life everlasting; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (200)

### **Thanksgiving to God**

Lord God, heavenly Father, from Your hand we receive all good gifts and by Your grace we are guarded from all evil. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that, acknowledging with our whole heart Your boundless goodness, we may now and evermore thank and praise You for Your loving-kindness and tender mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (201)

### **For a right knowledge of Christ**

Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us perfectly to know Your Son, Jesus Christ, to be the way, the truth, and the life, that following His steps we may steadfastly walk in the way that leads to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. (202)

### **Before the study of God's Word**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (203)

### **For spiritual renewal**

Almighty God, You gave Your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon Himself. Grant that we, Your adopted children by grace, may daily be renewed by Your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (204)

Almighty God, grant that we, who have been redeemed from the old life of sin by our Baptism into the death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, may be renewed by Your Holy Spirit to live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (205)

### **For reconciliation**

God of love, through Your Son You have commanded us to love one another. By the guidance of Your Word and Spirit, deliver us from impenitence and teach us the truth that we might confess our sins, receive Your forgiveness, and be reconciled to one another; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (206)

### **For deliverance from sin**

We implore You, O Lord, in Your kindness to show us Your great mercy that we may be set free from our sins and rescued from the punishments that we rightfully deserve; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (207)

### **For aid against temptation**

O God, You justify the ungodly and desire not the death of the sinner. Graciously assist us by Your heavenly aid and evermore shield us with Your protection, that no temptation may separate us from Your love in Christ Jesus, our Lord. (208)

**In times of temptation**

Almighty and everlasting God, through Your Son You have promised us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. Govern our hearts by Your Holy Spirit that in our daily need, and especially in all time of temptation, we may seek Your help and, by a true and lively faith in Your Word, obtain all that You have promised; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. (209)

**For control of the tongue**

We pray You, O Lord, to keep our tongues from evil and our lips from speaking deceit, that as Your holy angels continuously sing praises to You in heaven, so may we at all times glorify You on earth; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (210)

**For purity**

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (211)

**For faithfulness**

Lord God, we thank You that You have taught us what You would have us believe and do. Help us by Your Holy Spirit, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to hold fast Your Word in hearts that You have cleansed that thereby we may be made strong in faith and perfect in holiness and be comforted in life and death; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (212)

**Innocence of life**

O God, whose strength is made perfect in weakness, put to death in us all vices and so strengthen us by Your grace that by the innocence of our lives and the constancy of our faith, even unto death, we may glorify Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (213)

**Grace to love and serve God**

O God, through the grace of Your Holy Spirit You pour the gifts of love into the hearts of Your faithful people. Grant Your servants health both of mind and body that they may love You with their whole heart and with their whole strength perform those things that are pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (214)

**For those who care for others**

Most merciful Father, You have committed to our love and care our fellow human beings and their necessities. Graciously be with and prosper all those who serve the sick and those in need. Let their service be abundantly blessed as they bring relief to the suffering, comfort to the sorrowing, and peace to the dying. Grant them the knowledge that inasmuch as they do it unto the least of the Master's brethren, they do it unto Him; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. (215)

**For humility**

O God, You resist the proud and give grace to the humble. Grant us true humility after the likeness of Your only Son that we may never be arrogant and prideful and thus provoke Your wrath, but in all lowliness be made partakers of the gifts of Your grace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (216)

### **For patience**

O God, by the patient endurance of Your only-begotten Son You beat down the pride of the old enemy. Help us to treasure rightly in our hearts what our Lord has borne for our sakes that, after His example, we may bear with patience those things that are adverse to us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (217)

### **Answer to prayer**

Almighty God, since You have granted us the favor to call on You with one accord and have promised that where two or three are gathered together in Your name You are in the midst of them, fulfill now the prayers of Your servants, granting us in this world knowledge of Your truth and in the world to come life everlasting; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (218)

Almighty God, You have promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in Your Son's name. Mercifully incline Your ears to us who have now made our prayers and supplications to You, and grant that those things that we have faithfully asked according to Your will we may receive to meet our need and bring glory to You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (219)

### **For a blessed death**

Almighty God, grant Your unworthy servants Your grace, that in the hour of our death the adversary may not prevail against us, but that we may be found worthy of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (220)

### **Blessedness of heaven**

Almighty, everlasting God, You gave Your only Son to be a High Priest of good things to come. Grant unto us, Your unworthy servants, to have our share in the company of the blessed for all eternity; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (221)

### **Hope of eternal life in Christ**

Almighty, everlasting God, Your Son has assured forgiveness of sins and deliverance from eternal death. Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit that our faith in Christ may increase daily and that we may hold fast to the hope that on the Last Day we shall be raised in glory to eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (222)



The sea of this world lies between  
where we are going, even though we  
have already seen where we are going.  
And what has God done? He has  
provided the wood by which we may  
cross the sea. For no one can cross the  
sea of the world unless carried by the  
cross of Christ.

—Augustine, *Tractatus in  
evangelium Ioannis* 2.2



# THE PSALMS

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# SINGING THE PSALMS

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The psalms are pointed for singing. Each psalm verse is divided into two parts, with an asterisk ( \* ) indicating the point of division. Most of the text of each half verse is sung to a reciting tone  $\smile$ . At the point of the vertical line ( | ) the final two or three syllables are sung to the notes provided. Ordinarily there is one syllable of text for each note. When there are only two syllables, the first syllable is sung to two notes.

In addition to a number of single tones, three double tones are also provided. Two verses of text are sung to these tones. Double tones are especially appropriate for longer psalms and work best when sung to a psalm with an even number of verses.

Any psalm can be sung to any tone. It is best, however, that the tone, which can range from cheerful and bright to somber and austere, be appropriate to the text.

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

# THE PSALTER

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## 1

- <sup>1</sup> Blessèd is the man who walks not in the  
counsel of the | wicked,\*  
nor stands in the way of sinners,  
nor sits in the seat of | scoffers;
- <sup>2</sup> but his delight is in the law | of the LORD,\*  
and on his law he meditates | day  
and night.
- <sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams  
of water that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not | wither.\*  
In all that he does, he | prospers.
- <sup>4</sup> The wicked | are not so,\*  
but are like chaff that the  
wind | drives away.
- <sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand  
in the | judgment,\*  
nor sinners in the congregation  
of the | righteous;
- <sup>6</sup> for the LORD knows the way of  
the | righteous,\*  
but the way of the wicked will | perish.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 2

- <sup>1</sup> Why do the | nations rage\*  
and the peoples | plot in vain?
- <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and  
the rulers take counsel to- | gether,\*  
against the LORD and against his  
anointed, | saying,

- <sup>3</sup> “Let us burst their | bonds apart\*  
and cast away their | cords from us.”
- <sup>4</sup> He who sits in the | heavens laughs,\*  
the Lord holds them in de- | rision.
- <sup>5</sup> Then he will speak to them | in his wrath,\*  
and terrify them in his fury, | saying,
- <sup>6</sup> “As for me, I have | set my King\*  
on Zion, my | holy hill.”
- <sup>7</sup> I will tell of | the decree.\*  
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;  
today I have be- | gotten you.
- <sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I will make the nations  
your | heritage,\*  
and the ends of the earth  
your pos- | session.
- <sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a | rod of iron\*  
and dash them in pieces like  
a potter’s | vessel.”
- <sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O | kings, be wise;\*  
be warned, O rulers | of the earth.
- <sup>11</sup> Serve the | LORD with fear,\*  
and rejoice with | trembling.
- <sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you  
perish in the way, for his wrath is  
quickly | kindled.\*  
Blessèd are all who take ref- | uge in him.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

3

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, how many | are my foes!\*
- Many are rising a- | gainst me;
- <sup>2</sup> many are saying | of my soul,\*
- there is no salvation for | him in God.
- <sup>3</sup> But you, O LORD, are a shield a- | bout me,\*
- my glory, and the lifter | of my head.
- <sup>4</sup> I cried aloud | to the LORD,\*
- and he answered me from his | holy hill.
- <sup>5</sup> I lay | down and slept;\*
- I woke again, for the LORD
- sus- | tained me.
- <sup>6</sup> I will not be afraid of many thousands
- of | people\*
- who have set themselves against me | all
- around.
- <sup>7</sup> Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God! For
- you strike all my enemies | on the cheek;\*
- you break the teeth of the | wicked.
- <sup>8</sup> Salvation belongs | to the LORD;\*
- your blessing be on your | people!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***
- and to the Holy | Spirit;**
- as it was in the be- | ginning,\*
- is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

4

- <sup>1</sup> Answer me when I call, O God of my
- righteousness! You have given me relief
- when I was | in distress.\*
- Be gracious to me and | hear my prayer!
- <sup>2</sup> O men, how long shall my honor be
- turned | into shame?\*
- How long will you love vain words and
- seek | after lies?
- <sup>3</sup> But know that the LORD has set apart the
- godly | for himself;\*
- the LORD hears when I | call to him.
- <sup>4</sup> Be angry, and | do not sin;\*
- ponder in your own hearts on your beds,
- and be | silent.

- <sup>5</sup> Offer right sacri- | fices,\*
- and put your trust | in the LORD.
- <sup>6</sup> There are many who say,
- “Who will show | us some good?\*
- Lift up the light of your face
- upon us, | O LORD!”
- <sup>7</sup> You have put more joy | in my heart\*
- than they have when their grain
- and | wine abound.
- <sup>8</sup> In peace I will both lie | down and sleep;\*
- for you alone, O LORD,
- make me dwell in | safety.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***
- and to the Holy | Spirit;**
- as it was in the be- | ginning,\***
- is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

5

- <sup>1</sup> Give ear to my words, | O LORD;\*
- consider my | groaning.
- <sup>2</sup> Give attention to the sound of my cry,
- my King | and my God,\*
- for to you | do I pray.
- <sup>3</sup> O LORD, in the morning you | hear
- my voice;\*
- in the morning I prepare a sacrifice
- for | you and watch.
- <sup>4</sup> For you are not a God who delights
- in | wickedness;\*
- evil may not | dwell with you.
- <sup>5</sup> The boastful shall not stand be- | fore
- your eyes;\*
- you hate all evil- | doers.
- <sup>6</sup> You destroy those | who speak lies;\*
- the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and
- de- | ceitful man.
- <sup>7</sup> But I, through the abundance of your
- steadfast love, will en- | ter your house.\*
- I will bow down toward your holy temple
- in the | fear of you.

<sup>8</sup> Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness  
because of my | enemies;\*  
make your way straight be- | fore me.

<sup>9</sup> For there is no truth in their mouth;  
their inmost self is de- | struction;\*  
their throat is an open grave;  
they flatter | with their tongue.

<sup>10</sup> Make them bear their guilt, O God;  
let them fall by their own | counsels;\*  
because of the abundance of their  
transgressions cast them out, for  
they have rebelled a- | gainst you.

<sup>11</sup> But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;  
let them ever | sing for joy,\*  
and spread your protection over them,  
that those who love your name  
may ex- | ult in you.

<sup>12</sup> For you bless the righteous, | O LORD;\*  
you cover him with favor  
as | with a shield.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 6

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, rebuke me not in your | anger,\*  
nor discipline me | in your wrath.

<sup>2</sup> Be gracious to me, O LORD,  
for I am | languishing;\*  
heal me, O LORD,  
for my bones are | troubled.

<sup>3</sup> My soul also is greatly | troubled.\*  
But you, O LORD— | how long?

<sup>4</sup> Turn, O LORD, deliv- | er my life;\*  
save me for the sake of  
your | steadfast love.

<sup>5</sup> For in death there is no remem- | brance  
of you;\*  
in Sheol who will | give you praise?

<sup>6</sup> I am weary with my moaning; every night  
I flood my | bed with tears,\*

I drench my couch with my | weeping.

<sup>7</sup> My eye wastes away be- | cause of grief;\*  
it grows weak because of | all my foes.

<sup>8</sup> Depart from me, all you workers of | evil,\*  
for the LORD has heard the sound  
of my | weeping.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD has | heard my plea;\*  
the LORD ac- | cepts my prayer.

<sup>10</sup> All my enemies shall be ashamed and  
greatly | troubled;\*  
they shall turn back and  
be put to shame in a | moment.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 7

<sup>1</sup> O LORD my God, in you do I take | refuge;\*  
save me from all my pursuers  
and de- | liver me,

<sup>2</sup> lest like a lion they tear my | soul apart,\*  
rending it in pieces, with none  
to de- | liver.

<sup>3</sup> O LORD my God, if I have | done this,\*  
if there is wrong | in my hands,

<sup>4</sup> if I have repaid my friend with | evil\*  
or plundered my enemy with- | out cause,

<sup>5</sup> let the enemy pursue my soul and  
over- | take it,\*

and let him trample my life to the  
ground and lay my glory | in the dust.

<sup>6</sup> Arise, O LORD, in your anger; lift yourself  
up against the fury of my | enemies;\*  
awake for me; you have appointed  
a | judgment.

<sup>7</sup> Let the assembly of the peoples  
 be gathered a- | bout you;\*  
 over it re- | turn on high.

<sup>8</sup> he LORD judges the | peoples;\*  
 judge me, O LORD, according  
 to my righteousness and according  
 to the integrity that is | in me.

<sup>9</sup> Oh, let the evil of the wicked come  
 to an end, and may you establish  
 the | righteous—\*  
 you who test the minds and hearts,  
 O | righteous God!

<sup>10</sup> My shield | is with God,\*  
 who saves the up- | right in heart.

<sup>11</sup> God is a | righteous judge,\*  
 and a God who feels indignation | every  
 day.

<sup>12</sup> If a man does not repent,  
 God will | whet his sword;\*  
 he has bent and read- | ied his bow;

<sup>13</sup> he has prepared for him  
 his deadly | weapons,\*  
 making his arrows | fiery shafts.

<sup>14</sup> Behold, the wicked man conceives | evil\*  
 and is pregnant with mischief  
 and gives | birth to lies.

<sup>15</sup> He makes a pit, digging | it out,\*  
 and falls into the hole that | he has made.

<sup>16</sup> His mischief returns upon | his own head,\*  
 and on his own skull  
 his violence | de-scends.

<sup>17</sup> I will give to the LORD the thanks  
 due to his | righteousness,\*  
 and I will sing praise to the name of the  
 LORD, the | Most High.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**8**

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, our Lord, how majestic  
 is your name in | all the earth!\*  
 You have set your glory  
 above the | heavens.

<sup>2</sup> Out of the mouth of babes and infants,  
 you have established strength  
 because | of your foes,\*  
 to still the enemy and the a- | venger.

<sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens,  
 the work of your | fingers,\*  
 the moon and the stars,  
 which you have | set in place,

<sup>4</sup> what is man that you are  
 mind- | ful of him,\*  
 and the son of man  
 that you | care for him?

<sup>5</sup> Yet you have made him a little lower  
 than the heavenly | beings\*  
 and crowned him with glory and | honor.

<sup>6</sup> You have given him dominion over  
 the works | of your hands;\*  
 you have put all things under | his feet,

<sup>7</sup> all sheep and | oxen,\*  
 and also the beasts | of the field,

<sup>8</sup> the birds of the heavens,  
 and the fish | of the sea,\*  
 whatever passes along  
 the paths | of the seas.

<sup>9</sup> O | LORD, our Lord,\*  
 how majestic is your name  
 in | all the earth!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 9

- <sup>1</sup> I will give thanks to the LORD  
with my | whole heart;\*  
I will recount all of your  
won- | derful deeds.
- <sup>2</sup> I will be glad and ex- | ult in you;\*  
I will sing praise to your  
name, | O Most High.
- <sup>3</sup> When my enemies | turn back,\*  
they stumble and perish  
before your | presence.
- <sup>4</sup> For you have maintained my | just cause;\*  
you have sat on the throne,  
giving righteous | judgment.
- <sup>5</sup> You have rebuked the nations;  
you have made the wicked | perish;\*  
you have blotted out their  
name forever and | ever.
- <sup>6</sup> The enemy came to an end in everlasting  
ruins; their cities you | rooted out;\*  
the very memory of them has | perished.
- <sup>7</sup> But the LORD sits enthroned for- | ever;\*  
he has established his throne for | justice,
- <sup>8</sup> and he judges the world  
with | righteousness;\*  
he judges the peoples with  
up- | rightness.
- <sup>9</sup> The LORD is a stronghold for | the  
oppressed,\*  
a stronghold in times of | trouble.
- <sup>10</sup> And those who know your name  
put their | trust in you,\*  
for you, O LORD, have not  
forsaken those who | seek you.
- <sup>11</sup> Sing praises to the LORD,  
who sits enthroned in | Zion!\*
- Tell among the peoples | his deeds!
- <sup>12</sup> For he who avenges blood is  
mind- | ful of them;\*  
he does not forget the cry  
of the af- | flicted.

- <sup>13</sup> Be gracious to me, | O LORD!\*
- See my affliction from those  
who hate me, O you who lift me  
up from the | gates of death,
- <sup>14</sup> that I may recount all your | praises,\*  
that in the gates of the daughter of Zion  
I may rejoice in your sal- | vation.
- <sup>15</sup> The nations have sunk in  
the pit | that they made;\*  
in the net that they hid,  
their own foot | has been caught.
- <sup>16</sup> The LORD has made himself known;  
he has executed | judgment;\*  
the wicked are snared in the work  
of | their own hands.
- <sup>17</sup> The wicked shall return | to Sheol,\*  
all the nations that for- | get God.
- <sup>18</sup> For the needy shall not always be  
for- | gotten,\*  
and the hope of the poor  
shall not perish for- | ever.
- <sup>19</sup> Arise, O LORD! Let not | man prevail,\*  
let the nations be judged be- | fore you!
- <sup>20</sup> Put them in fear, | O LORD!\*
- Let the nations know  
that they | are but men!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 10

- <sup>1</sup> Why, O LORD, do you stand a- | far off?\*
- Why do you hide yourself  
in times of | trouble?
- <sup>2</sup> In arrogance the wicked hotly  
pur- | sue the poor;\*  
let them be caught in the schemes  
that they | have devised.
- <sup>3</sup> For the wicked boasts of the  
desires | of his soul,\*  
and the one greedy for gain curses and  
renounc- | es the LORD.

- <sup>4</sup> In the pride of his face the wicked  
does not | seek him;\*  
all his thoughts are, “There | is no God.”
- <sup>5</sup> His ways prosper at all times; your  
judgments are on high, out | of his sight;\*  
as for all his foes, he | puffs at them.
- <sup>6</sup> He says in his heart,  
“I shall | not be moved;\*  
throughout all generations  
I shall not meet ad- | versity.”
- <sup>7</sup> His mouth is filled with cursing  
and deceit and op- | pression;\*  
under his tongue are mischief  
and in- | iquity.
- <sup>8</sup> He sits in ambush in the villages;  
in hiding places he murders the | innocent.\*  
His eyes stealthily watch  
for the | helpless;
- <sup>9</sup> he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket;  
he lurks that he may | seize the poor;\*  
he seizes the poor when he draws  
him in- | to his net.
- <sup>10</sup> The help- | less are crushed,\*  
sink down, and fall | by his might.
- <sup>11</sup> He says in his heart, “God has for- | gotten,\*  
he has hidden his face, he will never | see it.”
- <sup>12</sup> Arise, O LORD; O God, lift | up your hand;\*  
forget not the af- | flicted.
- <sup>13</sup> Why does the wicked renounce God  
and say | in his heart,\*  
“You will not call | to account”?
- <sup>14</sup> But you do see, for you note mischief  
and vexation, that you may take  
it in- | to your hands;\*  
to you the helpless commits himself;  
you have been the helper  
of the | fatherless.
- <sup>15</sup> Break the arm of the wicked  
and evil- | doer;\*  
call his wickedness to account  
till you | find none.

- <sup>16</sup> The LORD is king forever and | ever;\*  
the nations perish | from his land.
- <sup>17</sup> O LORD, you hear the desire  
of the af- | flicted;\*  
you will strength- | en their heart;  
you will incline your ear <sup>18</sup> to do justice to  
the fatherless and | the oppressed,\*  
so that man who is of the  
earth may strike ter- | ror no more.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 11

- <sup>1</sup> In the LORD I take refuge;  
how can you say | to my soul,\*  
“Flee like a bird to your | mountain,
- <sup>2</sup> for behold, the wicked | bend the bow;\*  
they have fitted their arrow to  
the string to shoot in the dark  
at the up- | right in heart;
- <sup>3</sup> if the foundations | are destroyed,\*  
what can the | righteous do?”
- <sup>4</sup> The LORD is in his holy temple;  
the LORD’s throne is in | heaven;\*  
his eyes see, his eyelids test,  
the chil- | dren of man.
- <sup>5</sup> The LORD tests the | righteous,\*  
but his soul hates the wicked and  
the one who loves | violence.
- <sup>6</sup> Let him rain coals on the | wicked;\*  
fire and sulfur and a scorching wind  
shall be the portion | of their cup.
- <sup>7</sup> For the LORD is righteous;  
he loves | righteous deeds;\*  
the upright shall be- | hold his face.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 12

- <sup>1</sup> Save, O LORD, for the godly | one is gone;\*  
for the faithful have vanished from  
among the chil- | dren of man.
- <sup>2</sup> Everyone utters lies to his | neighbor;\*  
with flattering lips and  
a double | heart they speak.
- <sup>3</sup> May the LORD cut off all | flattering lips,\*  
the tongue that | makes great boasts,
- <sup>4</sup> those who say, “With our tongue  
we | will prevail,\*  
our lips are with us;  
who is master | over us?”
- <sup>5</sup> “Because the poor are plundered,  
because the needy groan, I will now  
arise,” | says the LORD;\*  
“I will place him in the safety  
for | which he longs.”
- <sup>6</sup> The words of the LORD are | pure words,\*  
like silver refined in a furnace on the  
ground, purified | seven times.
- <sup>7</sup> You, O LORD, will | keep them;\*  
you will guard us from this  
generation for- | ever.
- <sup>8</sup> On every side the | wicked prowl,\*  
as vileness is exalted among the  
chil- | dren of man.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 13

- <sup>1</sup> How long, O LORD?  
Will you forget me for- | ever?\*
- How long will you hide  
your | face from me?
- <sup>2</sup> How long must I take counsel in my soul  
and have sorrow in my heart | all the day?\*
- How long shall my enemy  
be exalted | over me?

- <sup>3</sup> Consider and answer me,  
O | LORD my God;\*  
light up my eyes, lest I sleep  
the | sleep of death,
- <sup>4</sup> lest my enemy say, “I have  
prevailed | over him,”\*  
lest my foes rejoice because  
I am | shaken.
- <sup>5</sup> But I have trusted in your | steadfast love;\*  
my heart shall rejoice  
in your sal- | vation.
- <sup>6</sup> I will sing | to the LORD,\*  
because he has dealt bountifully | with me.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 14

- <sup>1</sup> The fool says in his heart,  
“There | is no God.”\*  
They are corrupt, they do abominable  
deeds, there is none | who does good.
- <sup>2</sup> The LORD looks down from heaven  
on the chil- | dren of man,\*  
to see if there are any who understand,  
who seek | after God.
- <sup>3</sup> They have all turned aside;  
together they have be- | come corrupt,\*  
there is none who does good,  
not | even one.
- <sup>4</sup> Have they no knowledge, all the evil- | doers\*  
who eat up my people as they eat bread  
and do not call up- | on the LORD?
- <sup>5</sup> There they are in great | terror,\*  
for God is with the generation  
of the | righteous.
- <sup>6</sup> You would shame the plans | of the poor,\*  
but the LORD is his | refuge.
- <sup>7</sup> Oh, that salvation for Israel would  
come out of | Zion!\*

When the LORD restores the fortunes  
of his people, let Jacob rejoice,  
let Israel | be glad.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 15

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, who shall sojourn | in your tent?\*  
Who shall dwell on your | holy hill?
- <sup>2</sup> He who walks blamelessly and  
does | what is right\*  
and speaks truth | in his heart;
- <sup>3</sup> who does not slander with his tongue  
and does no evil to his | neighbor,\*  
nor takes up a reproach  
a- | gainst his friend;
- <sup>4</sup> in whose eyes a vile person is despised,  
but who honors those who | fear the LORD;\*  
who swears to his own hurt  
and | does not change;
- <sup>5</sup> who does not put out his money  
at interest and does not take  
a bribe against the | innocent.\*  
He who does these things  
shall nev- | er be moved.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 16

- <sup>1</sup> Preserve me, | O God,\*  
for in you I take | refuge.
- <sup>2</sup> I say to the LORD, “You | are my Lord,\*  
I have no good a- | part from you.”
- <sup>3</sup> As for the saints | in the land,\*  
they are the excellent ones,  
in whom is all | my delight.
- <sup>4</sup> The sorrows of those who run  
after another god shall | multiply;\*

their drink offerings of blood I will not  
pour out or take their names | on my lips.

- <sup>5</sup> The LORD is my chosen portion | and  
my cup;\*  
you | hold my lot.
- <sup>6</sup> The lines have fallen for me  
in pleasant | places;\*  
indeed, I have a beautiful in- | heritance.
- <sup>7</sup> I bless the LORD who gives me | counsel;\*  
in the night also my heart  
in- | structs me.
- <sup>8</sup> I have set the LORD always be- | fore me;\*  
because he is at my right hand,  
I shall not be | shaken.
- <sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad, and  
my whole being re- | joices;\*  
my flesh also | dwells secure.
- <sup>10</sup> For you will not abandon my  
soul | to Sheol,\*  
or let your holy one see cor- | ruption.
- <sup>11</sup> You make known to me the | path of life;\*  
in your presence there is fullness of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures  
for- | evermore.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 17

- <sup>1</sup> Hear a just cause, O LORD;  
attend | to my cry!\*  
Give ear to my prayer from lips  
free | of deceit!
- <sup>2</sup> From your presence let my  
vindi- | cation come!\*
- Let your eyes be- | hold the right!
- <sup>3</sup> You have tried my heart, you have  
visited me by night, you have tested me,  
and you will find | nothing;\*
- I have purposed that my mouth  
will | not transgress.

<sup>4</sup> With regard to the works of man,  
 by the word | of your lips\*  
 I have avoided the ways of the | violent.  
<sup>5</sup> My steps have held fast | to your paths;\*  
 my feet | have not slipped.  
<sup>6</sup> I call upon you, for you will  
 answer me, | O God;\*  
 incline your ear to me; | hear my words.  
<sup>7</sup> Wondrously show your | steadfast love,\*  
 O Savior of those who seek refuge from  
 their adversaries at | your right hand.  
<sup>8</sup> Keep me as the apple | of your eye;\*  
 hide me in the shadow | of your wings,  
<sup>9</sup> from the wicked who do me | violence,\*  
 my deadly enemies who sur- | round me.  
<sup>10</sup> They close their hearts to | pity;\*  
 with their mouths they  
 speak ar- | rogantly.  
<sup>11</sup> They have now surrounded | our steps;\*  
 they set their eyes to cast  
 us | to the ground.  
<sup>12</sup> He is like a lion ea- | ger to tear,\*  
 as a young lion lurking in | ambush.  
<sup>13</sup> Arise, | O LORD!\*  
 Confront him, sub- | due him!  
 Deliver my soul from the wicked by your  
 sword, <sup>14</sup> from men by your hand, | O LORD,\*  
 from men of the world whose  
 portion is | in this life.  
 You fill their womb with | treasure;\*  
 they are satisfied with children, and they  
 leave their abundance to their | infants.  
<sup>15</sup> As for me, I shall behold your  
 face in | righteousness;\*  
 when I awake, I shall be satisfied  
 with your | likeness.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 18

<sup>1</sup> I | love you,\*  
 O | LORD, my strength.  
<sup>2</sup> The LORD is my rock and my fortress  
 and my de- | liverer,\*  
 my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
 my shield, and the horn of my salvation,  
 my | stronghold.  
<sup>3</sup> I call upon the LORD, who is  
 worthy | to be praised,\*  
 and I am saved from my | enemies.  
<sup>4</sup> The cords of death en- | compassed me;\*  
 the torrents of destruction as- | sailed me;  
<sup>5</sup> the cords of Sheol en- | tangled me,\*  
 the snares of death con- | fronted me.  
<sup>6</sup> In my distress I called upon the LORD;  
 to my God I | cried for help.\*  
 From his temple he heard my voice,  
 and my cry to him | reached his ears.  
<sup>7</sup> Then the earth | reeled and rocked,\*  
 the foundations also of the mountains  
 trembled and quaked,  
 because he was | angry.  
<sup>8</sup> Smoke went up from his nostrils,  
 and devouring fire | from his mouth;\*  
 glowing coals flamed | forth from him.  
<sup>9</sup> He bowed the heavens and | came down,\*  
 thick darkness was un- | der his feet.  
<sup>10</sup> He rode on a cher- | ub and flew;\*  
 he came swiftly on the wings | of the wind.  
<sup>11</sup> He made darkness his covering,  
 his canopy a- | round him,\*  
 thick clouds dark with | water.  
<sup>12</sup> Out of the brightness be- | fore him\*  
 hailstones and coals of fire  
 broke | through his clouds.  
<sup>13</sup> The LORD also thundered in the | heavens,\*  
 and the Most High uttered his voice,  
 hailstones and | coals of fire.  
<sup>14</sup> And he sent out his arrows  
 and | scattered them;\*

- he flashed forth lightnings  
and | routed them.
- <sup>15</sup> Then the channels of the sea were seen, and  
the foundations of the world were | laid bare\*  
at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast  
of the breath of your | nostrils.
- <sup>16</sup> He sent from on high, he | took me;\*  
he drew me out of many | waters.
- <sup>17</sup> He rescued me from my strong | enemy\*  
and from those who hated me,  
for they were too might- | y for me.
- <sup>18</sup> They confronted me in the day  
of my ca- | lamity,\*  
but the LORD was | my support.
- <sup>19</sup> He brought me out into a | broad place;\*  
he rescued me, because  
he delight- | ed in me.
- <sup>20</sup> The LORD dealt with me according  
to my | righteousness,\*  
according to the cleanness  
of my hands he re- | warded me.
- <sup>21</sup> For I have kept the ways | of the LORD,\*  
and have not wickedly  
departed | from my God.
- <sup>22</sup> For all his just decrees were be- | fore me,\*  
and his statutes I did not  
put a- | way from me.
- <sup>23</sup> I was blameless be- | fore him,\*  
and I kept myself | from my guilt.
- <sup>24</sup> So the LORD has rewarded me  
according to my | righteousness,\*  
according to the cleanness  
of my hands | in his sight.
- <sup>25</sup> With the merciful you  
show yourself | merciful,\*  
with the blameless man you show  
yourself | blameless;
- <sup>26</sup> with the purified you show  
your- | self pure;\*  
and with the crooked you  
make yourself seem | tortuous.
- <sup>27</sup> For you save a humble | people,\*  
but the haughty eyes | you bring down.
- <sup>28</sup> For it is you who | light my lamp;\*  
the LORD my God lightens my | darkness.
- <sup>29</sup> For by you I can run a- | gainst a troop,\*  
and by my God I can leap o- | ver a wall.
- <sup>30</sup> This God—his way is | perfect,\*  
the word of the LORD proves true;  
he is a shield for all those who  
take ref- | uge in him.
- <sup>31</sup> For who is God, | but the LORD?\*
- And who is a rock, ex- | cept our God?—
- <sup>32</sup> the God who equipped | me with strength\*  
and made my way | blameless.
- <sup>33</sup> He made my feet like the feet | of a deer\*  
and set me secure | on the heights.
- <sup>34</sup> He trains my | hands for war,\*  
so that my arms can  
bend a | bow of bronze.
- <sup>35</sup> You have given me the shield  
of your sal- | vation,\*  
and your right hand supported me,  
and your gentleness | made me great.
- <sup>36</sup> You gave a wide place for  
my steps | under me,\*  
and my feet | did not slip.
- <sup>37</sup> I pursued my enemies  
and over- | took them,\*  
and did not turn back till  
they | were consumed.
- <sup>38</sup> I thrust them through, so that  
they were not a- | ble to rise;\*  
they fell un- | der my feet.
- <sup>39</sup> For you equipped me with  
strength for the | battle,\*  
you made those who rise  
against me sink | under me.
- <sup>40</sup> You made my enemies turn  
their | backs to me,\*  
and those who hated me | I destroyed.

- 41 They cried for help, but  
there was | none to save;\*  
they cried to the LORD,  
but he did not | answer them.
- 42 I beat them fine as dust  
be- | fore the wind;\*  
I cast them out like the  
mire | of the streets.
- 43 You delivered me from strife  
with the | people;\*  
you made me the head of the nations;  
people whom I had not known | served me.
- 44 As soon as they heard of me  
they o- | beyed me;\*  
foreigners came cring- | ing to me.
- 45 Foreigners | lost heart\*  
and came trembling out  
of their | fortresses.
- 46 The LORD lives, and blessèd | be my rock,\*  
and exalted be the God  
of my sal- | vation—
- 47 the God who gave me | vengeance\*  
and subdued peoples | under me,
- 48 who delivered me from my enemies; yes,  
you exalted me above those  
who rose a- | gainst me;\*  
you rescued me from  
the man of | violence.
- 49 For this I will praise you,  
O LORD, among the | nations,\*  
and sing | to your name.
- 50 Great salvation he brings | to his king,\*  
and shows steadfast love to his anointed,  
to David and his offspring for- | ever.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 19

- 1 The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God,\*  
and the sky above proclaims  
his | handiwork.
- 2 Day to day | pours out speech,\*  
and night to night reveals | knowledge.
- 3 There is no speech, nor | are there words,\*  
whose voice | is not heard.
- 4 Their measuring line goes out through all  
the earth, and their words  
to the end | of the world.\*  
In them he has set a tent | for the sun,
- 5 which comes out like a bridegroom  
leaving his | chamber,\*  
and, like a strong man,  
runs its | course with joy.
- 6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
and its circuit to the | end of them,\*  
and there is nothing  
hidden | from its heat.
- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect,  
reviv- | ing the soul;\*  
the testimony of the LORD is sure,  
making wise the | simple;
- 8 the precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing | the heart;\*  
the commandment of the LORD is pure,  
enlightening | the eyes;
- 9 the fear of the LORD is clean,  
enduring for- | ever;\*  
the just decrees of the LORD are true,  
and righteous alto- | gether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold,  
even | much fine gold;\*  
sweeter also than honey and drippings  
of the | honeycomb.
- 11 Moreover, by them is your | servant  
warned;\*  
in keeping them there is | great reward.
- 12 Who can dis- | cern his errors?\*
- Declare me innocent  
from | hidden faults.

<sup>13</sup> Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion | over me!\*

Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great trans- | gression.

<sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable | in your sight,\*

O LORD, my rock and my re- | deemer.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 20

<sup>1</sup> May the LORD answer you in the day of | trouble!\*

May the name of the God of Jacob pro- | tect you!

<sup>2</sup> May he send you help from the sanctu- | ary\*

and give you support from | Zion!

<sup>3</sup> May he remember all your | offerings\* and regard with favor your burnt sacri- | fices!

<sup>4</sup> May he grant you your | heart's desire\* and fulfill | all your plans!

<sup>5</sup> May we shout for joy over your salvation, and in the name of our God set up our | banners!\*

May the LORD fulfill all your pe- | titions!

<sup>6</sup> Now I know that the LORD saves his a- | nointed,\*

he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his | right hand.

<sup>7</sup> Some trust in chariots and some in | horses,\*

but we trust in the name of the | LORD our God.

<sup>8</sup> They col- | lapse and fall,\*

but we rise and | stand upright.

<sup>9</sup> O LORD, | save the king!\*

May he answer us | when we call.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 21

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, in your strength the king re- | joices,\*

and in your salvation how greatly | he exults!

<sup>2</sup> You have given him his | heart's desire\* and have not withheld the request | of his lips.

<sup>3</sup> For you meet him with rich | blessings;\* you set a crown of fine gold up- | on his head.

<sup>4</sup> He asked life of you; you gave | it to him,\* length of days forever and | ever.

<sup>5</sup> His glory is great through your sal- | vation,\* splendor and majesty you be- | stow on him.

<sup>6</sup> For you make him most blessed for- | ever;\* you make him glad with the joy of your | presence.

<sup>7</sup> For the king trusts | in the LORD,\* and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall | not be moved.

<sup>8</sup> Your hand will find out all your | enemies;\* your right hand will find out those who | hate you.

<sup>9</sup> You will make them as a blazing oven when | you appear.\*

The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath, and fire will con- | sume them.

<sup>10</sup> You will destroy their descendants | from the earth,\*

and their offspring from among the chil- | dren of man.

- <sup>11</sup> Though they plan evil a- | gainst you,\*  
though they devise mischief,  
they will | not succeed.
- <sup>12</sup> For you will put | them to flight;\*  
you will aim at their faces | with  
your bows.
- <sup>13</sup> Be exalted, O LORD, | in your strength!\*  
We will sing and | praise your power.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 22

- <sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have you  
for- | saken me?\*
- Why are you so far from saving me,  
from the words of my | groaning?
- <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day,  
but you do not | answer,\*  
and by night, but I | find no rest.
- <sup>3</sup> Yet you are | holy,\*  
enthroned on the praises of | Israel.
- <sup>4</sup> In you our fathers | trusted;\*  
they trusted, and you de- | livered them.
- <sup>5</sup> To you they cried and were | rescued;\*  
in you they trusted and were not | put to  
shame.
- <sup>6</sup> But I am a worm and | not a man,\*  
scorned by mankind and despised  
by the | people.
- <sup>7</sup> All who see me | mock me;\*  
they make mouths at me;  
they | wag their heads;
- <sup>8</sup> “He trusts in the LORD;  
let him de- | liver him,\*  
let him rescue him,  
for he de- | lights in him!”
- <sup>9</sup> Yet you are he who took me | from the  
womb;\*  
you made me trust you  
at my | mother’s breasts.
- <sup>10</sup> On you was I cast | from my birth,\*  
and from my mother’s womb  
you have | been my God.
- <sup>11</sup> Be not far from me, for trouble | is near,\*  
and there is | none to help.
- <sup>12</sup> Many bulls en- | compass me;\*  
strong bulls of Bashan sur- | round me;
- <sup>13</sup> they open wide their | mouths at me,\*  
like a ravening and roaring | lion.
- <sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are | out of joint;\*  
my heart is like wax;  
it is melted with- | in my breast;
- <sup>15</sup> my strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks | to my jaws;\*  
you lay me in the | dust of death.
- <sup>16</sup> For dogs en- | compass me;\*  
a company of evildoers encircles me;  
they have pierced my | hands and feet—
- <sup>17</sup> I can count | all my bones—\*  
they stare and gloat | over me;
- <sup>18</sup> they divide my garments a- | mong them,\*  
and for my clothing they | cast lots.
- <sup>19</sup> But you, O LORD, do not be | far off!\*  
O you my help, come quickly | to my aid!
- <sup>20</sup> Deliver my soul | from the sword,\*  
my precious life from  
the power | of the dog!
- <sup>21</sup> Save me from the mouth of the | lion!\*
- You have rescued me from  
the horns of the wild | oxen!
- <sup>22</sup> I will tell of your name to my | brothers;\*  
in the midst of the congregation  
I will | praise you:
- <sup>23</sup> You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
All you offspring of Jacob, glo- | rify him,\*  
and stand in awe of him, all you  
offspring of | Israel!
- <sup>24</sup> For he has not despised or abhorred  
the affliction of the afflicted, and  
he has not hidden his | face from him,\*  
but has heard, when he | cried to him.

- <sup>25</sup> From you comes my praise  
in the great congre- | gation;\*  
my vows I will perform  
before those who | fear him.
- <sup>26</sup> The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those  
who seek him shall | praise the LORD!\*
- May your hearts live for- | ever!
- <sup>27</sup> All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn | to the LORD,\*  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship be- | fore you.
- <sup>28</sup> For kingship belongs | to the LORD,\*  
and he rules over the | nations.
- <sup>29</sup> All the prosperous of the earth  
eat and | worship,\*  
before him shall bow all who go down  
to the dust, even the one who could  
not keep him- | self alive.
- <sup>30</sup> Posterity shall | serve him;\*  
it shall be told of the Lord  
to the coming gener- | ation;
- <sup>31</sup> they shall come and proclaim his  
righteousness to a people | yet unborn,\*  
that he has | done it.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 23

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD is my | shepherd;\*  
I | shall not want.
- <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green | pastures.\*  
He leads me beside still | waters.
- <sup>3</sup> He re- | stores my soul.\*  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his | name's sake.
- <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley  
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,  
for you are | with me,\*  
your rod and your staff, they | comfort me.

- <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my | enemies;\*  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup | overflows.
- <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy  
shall follow me all the days | of my life,\*  
and I shall dwell in the house  
of the LORD for- | ever.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 24

- <sup>1</sup> The earth is the LORD's  
and the full- | ness thereof,\*  
the world and those who | dwell therein,
- <sup>2</sup> for he has founded it up- | on the seas\*  
and established it upon the | rivers.
- <sup>3</sup> Who shall ascend the hill | of the LORD?\*
- And who shall stand in his | holy place?
- <sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a | pure heart,\*  
who does not lift up his soul to what is  
false and does not swear de- | ceitfully.
- <sup>5</sup> He will receive blessing | from the LORD\*  
and righteousness from the God  
of his sal- | vation.
- <sup>6</sup> Such is the generation of those  
who | seek him,\*  
who seek the face of the God of | Jacob.
- <sup>7</sup> Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And be lifted up, O | ancient doors,\*  
that the King of glory | may come in.
- <sup>8</sup> Who is this King of | glory?\*
- The LORD, strong and mighty,  
the LORD, mighty in | battle!
- <sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And lift them up, O | ancient doors,\*  
that the King of glory | may come in.

<sup>10</sup> Who is this King of | glory?\*

The LORD of hosts,  
he is the King of | glory!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 25

<sup>1</sup> To you, | O LORD,\*  
I lift | up my soul.

<sup>2</sup> O my God, in you I trust;  
let me not be | put to shame;\*  
let not my enemies exult | over me.

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, none who wait for you  
shall be | put to shame;\*  
they shall be ashamed  
who are wantonly | treacherous.

<sup>4</sup> Make me to know your ways, | O LORD,\*  
teach me | your paths.

<sup>5</sup> Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my sal- | vation;\*  
for you I wait all the | day long.

<sup>6</sup> Remember your mercy, O LORD,  
and your | steadfast love,\*  
for they have been | from of old.

<sup>7</sup> Remember not the sins of my youth  
or my trans- | gressions;\*  
according to your steadfast love  
remember me, for the sake  
of your goodness, | O LORD!

<sup>8</sup> Good and upright | is the LORD;\*  
therefore he instructs sinners | in the way.

<sup>9</sup> He leads the humble in | what is right,\*  
and teaches the humble | his way.

<sup>10</sup> All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love  
and | faithfulness,\*  
for those who keep his covenant  
and his testi- | monies.

<sup>11</sup> For your name's sake, | O LORD,\*  
pardon my guilt, for | it is great.

<sup>12</sup> Who is the man who | fears the LORD?\*

Him will he instruct in the way  
that | he should choose.

<sup>13</sup> His soul shall abide in well- | being,\*  
and his offspring shall  
inher- | it the land.

<sup>14</sup> The friendship of the LORD  
is for those who | fear him,\*  
and he makes known  
to them his | covenant.

<sup>15</sup> My eyes are ever | toward the LORD,\*  
for he will pluck my feet out | of the net.

<sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me,\*  
for I am lonely and af- | flicted.

<sup>17</sup> The troubles of my heart | are enlarged;\*  
bring me out of my dis- | tresses.

<sup>18</sup> Consider my affliction and my | trouble,\*  
and forgive | all my sins.

<sup>19</sup> Consider how many | are my foes,\*  
and with what violent hatred  
they | hate me.

<sup>20</sup> Oh, guard my soul, and de- | liver me!\*

Let me not be put to shame,  
for I take ref- | uge in you.

<sup>21</sup> May integrity and uprightness  
pre- | serve me,\*  
for I | wait for you.

<sup>22</sup> Redeem Israel, | O God,\*  
out of all his | troubles.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 26

<sup>1</sup> Vindicate me, O LORD,  
for I have walked in my in- | tegrity,\*  
and I have trusted in the LORD  
without | wavering.

<sup>2</sup> Prove me, O LORD, and | try me,\*  
test my heart | and my mind.

- <sup>3</sup> For your steadfast love is be- | fore my eyes,\*  
and I walk in your | faithfulness.
- <sup>4</sup> I do not sit with men of | falsehood,\*  
nor do I consort with | hypocrites.
- <sup>5</sup> I hate the assembly of evil- | doers,\*  
and I will not sit with the | wicked.
- <sup>6</sup> I wash my hands in | innocence\*  
and go around your altar, | O LORD,
- <sup>7</sup> proclaiming thanksgiving | aloud,\*  
and telling all your | wondrous deeds.
- <sup>8</sup> O LORD, I love the habitation | of your house\*  
and the place where your | glory dwells.
- <sup>9</sup> Do not sweep my soul away with | sinners,\*  
nor my life with blood- | thirsty men,
- <sup>10</sup> in whose hands are evil de- | vices,\*  
and whose right hands are | full of bribes.
- <sup>11</sup> But as for me, I shall walk  
in my in- | tegrity;\*  
redeem me, and be gra- | cious to me.
- <sup>12</sup> My foot stands on | level ground,\*  
in the great assembly  
I will | bless the LORD.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

27

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom | shall I fear?\*
- The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of  
whom shall I | be afraid?
- <sup>2</sup> When evildoers assail me  
to eat | up my flesh,\*  
my adversaries and foes,  
it is they who stum- | ble and fall.
- <sup>3</sup> Though an army encamp against me, my  
heart | shall not fear;\*  
though war arise against me,  
yet I will be | confident.
- <sup>4</sup> One thing have I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek | after:\*

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life, to gaze upon  
the beauty of the LORD and  
to inquire in his | temple.

- <sup>5</sup> For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of | trouble;\*  
he will conceal me under the cover of his  
tent; he will lift me high up- | on a rock.
- <sup>6</sup> And now my head shall be lifted up above  
my enemies all around me, and I will offer  
in his tent sacrifices with | shouts of joy;\*  
I will sing and make melody | to the LORD.
- <sup>7</sup> Hear, O LORD, when I | cry aloud;\*  
be gracious to me and | answer me!
- <sup>8</sup> You have said, | “Seek my face.”\*  
My heart says to you,  
“Your face, LORD, | do I seek.”
- <sup>9</sup> Hide not your face from me.  
Turn not your servant away in | anger,\*  
O you who have been my help.  
Cast me not off; forsake me not,  
O God of my sal- | vation!
- <sup>10</sup> For my father and my mother  
have for- | saken me,\*  
but the LORD will | take me in.
- <sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, | O LORD,\*  
and lead me on a level path because of  
my | enemies.

- <sup>12</sup> Give me not up to the will  
of my adver- | saries;\*  
for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they breathe out | violence.
- <sup>13</sup> I believe that I shall look upon the  
goodness | of the LORD\*  
in the land of the | living!
- <sup>14</sup> Wait | for the LORD;\*  
be strong, and let your heart take  
courage; wait | for the LORD!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 28

- <sup>1</sup> To you, O LORD, I call; my rock,  
be not | deaf to me,\*  
lest, if you be silent to me, I become like  
those who go down | to the pit.
- <sup>2</sup> Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy,  
when I cry to | you for help,\*  
when I lift up my hands toward your  
most holy sanctu- | ary.
- <sup>3</sup> Do not drag me off with the wicked,  
with the workers of | evil,\*  
who speak peace with their neighbors  
while evil is | in their hearts.
- <sup>4</sup> Give to them according to their work and  
according to the evil | of their deeds;\*  
give to them according to the work  
of their hands; render them  
their | due reward.
- <sup>5</sup> Because they do not regard the works  
of the LORD or the work | of his hands,\*  
he will tear them down and  
build them | up no more.
- <sup>6</sup> Blessèd | be the LORD!\*  
For he has heard the voice  
of my pleas for | mercy.
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD is my strength and my shield;  
in him my heart trusts, and | I am helped;\*  
my heart exults, and with my song  
I give | thanks to him.
- <sup>8</sup> The LORD is the strength of his | people,\*  
he is the saving refuge of his a- | nointed.
- <sup>9</sup> Oh, save your people and  
bless your | heritage!\*  
Be their shepherd and  
carry them for- | ever.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 29

- <sup>1</sup> Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly | beings,\*  
ascribe to the LORD glo- | ry  
and strength.
- <sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the LORD the glory | due his name;\*  
worship the LORD in the splendor  
of | holiness.
- <sup>3</sup> The voice of the LORD is over the | waters;\*  
the God of glory thunders,  
the LORD, over many | waters.
- <sup>4</sup> The voice of the LORD is | powerful;\*  
the voice of the LORD is full of | majesty.
- <sup>5</sup> The voice of the LORD breaks  
the | cedars;\*  
the LORD breaks the cedars of | Lebanon.
- <sup>6</sup> He makes Lebanon to skip | like a calf,\*  
and Sirion like a young | wild ox.
- <sup>7</sup> The voice | of the LORD \*  
flashes forth | flames of fire.
- <sup>8</sup> The voice of the LORD shakes  
the | wilderness;\*  
the LORD shakes the  
wilderness | of Kadesh.
- <sup>9</sup> The voice of the LORD makes the deer give  
birth and strips the | forests bare,\*  
and in his temple all cry, | “Glory!”
- <sup>10</sup> The LORD sits enthroned o- | ver the flood;\*  
the LORD sits enthroned as king for- | ever.
- <sup>11</sup> May the LORD give strength to his | people!\*  
May the LORD bless  
his people | with peace!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

30

- <sup>1</sup> I will extol you, O LORD,  
for you have | drawn me up\*  
and have not let my foes rejoice | over me.
- <sup>2</sup> O LORD my God, I cried to | you for help,\*  
and you have | healed me.
- <sup>3</sup> O LORD, you have brought up  
my soul | from Sheol;\*  
you restored me to life from among those  
who go down | to the pit.
- <sup>4</sup> Sing praises to the LORD,  
O | you his saints,\*  
and give thanks to his | holy name.
- <sup>5</sup> For his anger is but for a moment,  
and his favor is for a | lifetime.\*  
Weeping may tarry for the night,  
but joy comes with the | morning.
- <sup>6</sup> As for me, I said in my pros- | perity,\*  
“I shall nev- | er be moved.”
- <sup>7</sup> By your favor, O LORD,  
you made my mountain | stand strong;\*  
you hid your face; I | was dismayed.
- <sup>8</sup> To you, O | LORD, I cry,\*  
and to the Lord I plead for | mercy:
- <sup>9</sup> “What profit is there in my death,  
if I go down | to the pit?\*
- Will the dust praise you?  
Will it tell of your | faithfulness?
- <sup>10</sup> Hear, O LORD, and be merci- | ful to me!\*
- O LORD, be my | helper!”
- <sup>11</sup> You have turned for me my mourning  
into | dancing;\*  
you have loosed my sackcloth and  
clothed me with | gladness,
- <sup>12</sup> that my glory may sing your praise  
and not be | silent.\*  
O LORD my God, I will give thanks  
to you for- | ever!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

31

- <sup>1</sup> In you, O LORD, do I take refuge;  
let me never be | put to shame;\*  
in your righteousness de- | liver me!
- <sup>2</sup> Incline your ear to me;  
rescue me | speedily!\*  
Be a rock of refuge for me,  
a strong fortress to | save me!
- <sup>3</sup> For you are my rock and my | fortress;\*  
and for your name’s sake  
you lead me and | guide me;
- <sup>4</sup> you take me out of the net they  
have hidden | for me,\*  
for you are my | refuge.
- <sup>5</sup> Into your hand I commit my | spirit;\*  
you have redeemed me,  
O LORD, | faithful God.
- <sup>6</sup> I hate those who pay regard  
to worthless | idols,\*  
but I trust | in the LORD.
- <sup>7</sup> I will rejoice and be glad  
in your | steadfast love,\*  
because you have seen my affliction;  
you have known the distress | of my soul,
- <sup>8</sup> and you have not delivered me  
into the hand of the | enemy;\*  
you have set my feet in a | broad place.
- <sup>9</sup> Be gracious to me, O LORD,  
for I am | in distress;\*  
my eye is wasted from grief;  
my soul and my body | also.
- <sup>10</sup> For my life is spent with sorrow,  
and my years with | sighing;\*  
my strength fails because of my iniquity,  
and my bones | waste away.
- <sup>11</sup> Because of all my adversaries I have  
become a reproach, especially to  
my neighbors, and an object  
of dread to my ac- | quaintances;\*  
those who see me in the street | flee  
from me.

<sup>12</sup> I have been forgotten like one | who is dead;\*  
 I have become like a broken | vessel.  
<sup>13</sup> For I hear the whispering of many  
 —terror on | every side!—\*  
 as they scheme together against me,  
 as they plot to | take my life.  
<sup>14</sup> But I trust in you, | O LORD;\*  
 I say, “You | are my God.”  
<sup>15</sup> My times are | in your hand;\*  
 rescue me from the hand of my enemies  
 and from my perse- | cutors!  
<sup>16</sup> Make your face shine on your | servant;\*  
 save me in your | steadfast love!  
<sup>17</sup> O LORD, let me not be put to shame,  
 for I call up- | on you;\*  
 let the wicked be put to shame;  
 let them go silently | to Sheol.  
<sup>18</sup> Let the lying | lips be mute,\*  
 which speak insolently against the  
 righteous in pride | and contempt.  
<sup>19</sup> Oh, how abundant is your goodness,  
 which you have stored up  
 for those who | fear you\*  
 and worked for those  
 who take refuge in you, in the sight  
 of the children of | mankind!  
<sup>20</sup> In the cover of your presence you hide  
 them from the | plots of men;\*  
 you store them in your shelter  
 from the | strife of tongues.  
<sup>21</sup> Blessèd | be the LORD,\*  
 for he has wondrously shown his  
 steadfast love to me when  
 I was in a besieged | city.  
<sup>22</sup> I had said in my alarm,  
 “I am cut off | from your sight.”\*  
 But you heard the voice of my pleas for  
 mercy when I cried to | you for help.  
<sup>23</sup> Love the LORD, all | you his saints!\*  
 The LORD preserves the faithful  
 but abundantly repays  
 the one who | acts in pride.

<sup>24</sup> Be strong, and let your  
 heart take | courage,\*  
 all you who wait | for the LORD!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 32

<sup>1</sup> Blessèd is the one whose transgression  
 is for- | given,\*  
 whose sin is | covered.  
<sup>2</sup> Blessèd is the man against whom the Lord  
 counts no in- | iquity,\*  
 and in whose spirit there is | no deceit.  
<sup>3</sup> For when I kept silent,  
 my bones wast- | ed away\*  
 through my groaning | all day long.  
<sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy  
 up- | on me,\*  
 my strength was dried up  
 as by the heat of | summer.  
<sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to you,  
 and I did not cover my in- | iquity;\*  
 I said, “I will confess my transgressions  
 to the LORD,” and you forgave the  
 iniquity | of my sin.  
<sup>6</sup> Therefore let everyone who is godly  
 offer prayer to you at a time when  
 you | may be found;\*  
 surely in the rush of great waters,  
 they shall not | reach him.  
<sup>7</sup> You are a hiding place for me;  
 you preserve me from | trouble;\*  
 you surround me with shouts  
 of de- | liverance.  
<sup>8</sup> I will instruct you and teach you  
 in the way | you should go;\*  
 I will counsel you  
 with my eye up- | on you.

- <sup>9</sup> Be not like a horse or a mule,  
without under- | standing,\*  
which must be curbed with bit and  
bridle, or it will not stay | near you.
- <sup>10</sup> Many are the sorrows of the | wicked,\*  
but steadfast love surrounds the one  
who trusts | in the LORD.
- <sup>11</sup> Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice,  
O | righteous,\*  
and shout for joy,  
all you up- | right in heart!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 33

- <sup>1</sup> Shout for joy in the LORD,  
O you | righteous!\*  
Praise befits the | upright.
- <sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the LORD | with the lyre,\*  
make melody to him  
with the harp of | ten strings!
- <sup>3</sup> Sing to him a | new song,\*  
play skillfully on the strings,  
with | loud shouts.
- <sup>4</sup> For the word of the LORD is | upright,\*  
and all his work is done in | faithfulness.
- <sup>5</sup> He loves righteousness and | justice,\*  
the earth is full of the steadfast  
love | of the LORD.
- <sup>6</sup> By the word of the LORD  
the heav- | ens were made,\*  
and by the breath of his  
mouth | all their host.
- <sup>7</sup> He gathers the waters of the sea | as a heap,\*  
he puts the deeps in | storehouses.
- <sup>8</sup> Let all the earth | fear the LORD;\*  
let all the inhabitants of the world  
stand in | awe of him!
- <sup>9</sup> For he spoke, and it | came to be;\*  
he commanded, and it | stood firm.

- <sup>10</sup> The LORD brings the counsel  
of the nations to | nothing,\*  
he frustrates the plans of the | peoples.
- <sup>11</sup> The counsel of the LORD stands for- | ever,\*  
the plans of his heart  
to all gener- | ations.
- <sup>12</sup> Blessed is the nation whose  
God | is the LORD,\*  
the people whom he has chosen  
as his | heritage!
- <sup>13</sup> The LORD looks down from | heaven;\*  
he sees all the chil- | dren of man;  
<sup>14</sup> from where he sits enthroned  
he | looks out\*  
on all the inhabitants | of the earth,  
<sup>15</sup> he who fashions the hearts | of them all\*  
and observes | all their deeds.
- <sup>16</sup> The king is not saved by his great | army;\*  
a warrior is not delivered  
by his | great strength.
- <sup>17</sup> The war horse is a false hope  
for sal- | vation,\*  
and by its great might it cannot | rescue.
- <sup>18</sup> Behold, the eye of the LORD  
is on those who | fear him,\*  
on those who hope in his | steadfast love,  
<sup>19</sup> that he may deliver their | soul from death\*  
and keep them alive in | famine.
- <sup>20</sup> Our soul waits | for the LORD;\*  
he is our help | and our shield.
- <sup>21</sup> For our heart is | glad in him,\*  
because we trust in his | holy name.
- <sup>22</sup> Let your steadfast love, O LORD,  
be up- | on us,\*  
even as we | hope in you.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 34

- <sup>1</sup> I will bless the LORD at | all times;\*  
his praise shall continually  
be | in my mouth.
- <sup>2</sup> My soul makes its boast | in the LORD;\*  
let the humble hear | and be glad.
- <sup>3</sup> Oh, magnify the | LORD with me,\*  
and let us exalt his name to- | gether!
- <sup>4</sup> I sought the LORD, and he | answered me\*  
and delivered me from | all my fears.
- <sup>5</sup> Those who look to him are | radiant,\*  
and their faces shall never | be ashamed.
- <sup>6</sup> This poor man cried,  
and the LORD | heard him\*  
and saved him out of all his | troubles.
- <sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD encamps  
around those who | fear him,\*  
and de- | livers them.
- <sup>8</sup> Oh, taste and see that the | LORD is good!\*  
Blessèd is the man  
who takes ref- | uge in him!
- <sup>9</sup> Oh, fear the LORD, | you his saints,\*  
for those who fear him | have no lack!
- <sup>10</sup> The young lions suffer want and | hunger;\*  
but those who seek the LORD  
lack | no good thing.
- <sup>11</sup> Come, O children, lis- | ten to me;\*  
I will teach you the fear | of the LORD.
- <sup>12</sup> What man is there who de- | sires life\*  
and loves many days,  
that he may | see good?
- <sup>13</sup> Keep your tongue from | evil\*  
and your lips from speak- | ing deceit.
- <sup>14</sup> Turn away from evil | and do good,\*  
seek peace and pur- | sue it.
- <sup>15</sup> The eyes of the LORD are  
toward the | righteous\*  
and his ears | toward their cry.
- <sup>16</sup> The face of the LORD is against  
those who do | evil,\*

- to cut off the memory  
of them | from the earth.
- <sup>17</sup> When the righteous cry for help,  
the | LORD hears\*  
and delivers them out  
of all their | troubles.
- <sup>18</sup> The LORD is near to the broken- | hearted\*  
and saves the crushed in | spirit.
- <sup>19</sup> Many are the afflictions of the | righteous,\*  
but the LORD delivers him  
out | of them all.
- <sup>20</sup> He keeps | all his bones,\*  
not one of them is | broken.
- <sup>21</sup> Affliction will slay the | wicked,\*  
and those who hate the righteous  
will | be condemned.
- <sup>22</sup> The LORD redeems the life  
of his | servants,\*  
none of those who take refuge  
in him will | be condemned.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 35

- <sup>1</sup> Contend, O LORD, with those who  
con- | tend with me,\*  
fight against those who  
fight a- | gainst me!
- <sup>2</sup> Take hold of shield and | buckler\*  
and rise | for my help!
- <sup>3</sup> Draw the spear and javelin against  
my pur- | suers!\*  
Say to my soul, "I am your sal- | vation!"
- <sup>4</sup> Let them be put to shame and dishonor  
who seek after | my life!\*  
Let them be turned back and disap-  
pointed who devise evil a- | gainst me!
- <sup>5</sup> Let them be like chaff be- | fore the wind,\*  
with the angel of the LORD  
driving | them away!

6 Let their way be dark and | slippery,\*  
with the angel of the LORD  
pur- | suing them!

7 For without cause they hid  
their | net for me;\*  
without cause they dug a pit | for my life.

8 Let destruction come upon him  
when he does not | know it!\*  
And let the net that he hid ensnare him;  
let him fall into it—to his de- | struction!

9 Then my soul will rejoice | in the LORD,\*  
exulting in his sal- | vation.

10 All my bones shall say, “O LORD,  
who is | like you,\*  
delivering the poor from him who  
is too strong for him, the poor and needy  
from him who | robs him?”

11 Malicious witnesses | rise up;\*  
they ask me of things  
that I | do not know.

12 They repay me e- | vil for good;\*  
my soul | is bereft.

13 But I, when they were sick—I wore  
sackcloth; I afflicted myself with | fasting;\*  
I prayed with head bowed | on my chest.

14 I went about as though I grieved  
for my friend or my | brother;\*  
as one who laments his mother,  
I bowed down in | mourning.

15 But at my stumbling they rejoiced  
and | gathered;\*  
they gathered together against me;  
wretches whom I did not know tore  
at me without | ceasing;

16 like profane mockers | at a feast,\*  
they gnash at me | with their teeth.

17 How long, O Lord, will you | look on?\*

Rescue me from their destruction,  
my precious life from the | lions!

18 I will thank you in the  
great congre- | gation;\*  
in the mighty throng I will | praise you.

19 Let not those rejoice over me  
who are wrongfully | my foes,\*  
and let not those wink the eye  
who hate me with- | out cause.

20 For they do | not speak peace,\*  
but against those who are quiet in the  
land they devise words | of deceit.

21 They open wide their mouths  
a- | gainst me;\*  
they say, “Aha, Aha! Our eyes  
have | seen it!”

22 You have seen, O LORD; be not | silent!\*

O Lord, be not | far from me!

23 Awake and rouse yourself  
for my vindi- | cation,\*  
for my cause, my God | and my Lord!

24 Vindicate me, O LORD, my God,  
according to your | righteousness,\*  
and let them not rejoice | over me!

25 Let them not say in their hearts,  
“Aha, our | heart’s desire!”\*  
Let them not say,  
“We have swal- | lowed him up.”

26 Let them be put to shame and disappointed  
altogether who rejoice at my ca- | lamity!\*

Let them be clothed with shame  
and dishonor who magnify themselves  
a- | gainst me!

27 Let those who delight in my righteousness  
shout for joy and be glad  
and say | evermore,\*  
“Great is the LORD, who delights  
in the welfare of his | servant!”

28 Then my tongue shall tell  
of your | righteousness\*  
and of your praise all | the day long.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 36

- <sup>1</sup> Transgression speaks to the wicked  
deep | in his heart;\*  
there is no fear of God be- | fore his eyes.
- <sup>2</sup> For he flatters himself in | his own eyes\*  
that his iniquity cannot be found out  
and | hated.
- <sup>3</sup> The words of his mouth  
are trouble | and deceit;\*  
he has ceased to act wisely | and do good.
- <sup>4</sup> He plots trouble while | on his bed;\*  
he sets himself in a way that is not good;  
he does not reject | evil.
- <sup>5</sup> Your steadfast love, O LORD,  
extends to the | heavens;\*  
your faithfulness | to the clouds.
- <sup>6</sup> Your righteousness is like  
the moun- | tains of God;\*  
your judgments are like the great deep;  
man and beast you save, | O LORD.
- <sup>7</sup> How precious is your  
steadfast love, | O God!\*  
The children of mankind take refuge  
in the shadow | of your wings.
- <sup>8</sup> They feast on the abundance | of your house,\*  
and you give them drink  
from the river of | your delights.
- <sup>9</sup> For with you is the foun- | tain of life;\*  
in your light do | we see light.
- <sup>10</sup> Oh, continue your steadfast love  
to those who | know you,\*  
and your righteousness  
to the up- | right of heart!
- <sup>11</sup> Let not the foot of arrogance  
come up- | on me,\*  
nor the hand of the wicked  
drive | me away.
- <sup>12</sup> There the evildoers lie | fallen;\*  
they are thrust down, unable | to rise.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 37

- <sup>1</sup> Fret not yourself because of evil- | doers;\*  
be not envious of wrong- | doers!
- <sup>2</sup> For they will soon fade | like the grass\*  
and wither like the | green herb.
- <sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, | and do good;\*  
dwell in the land  
and befriend | faithfulness.
- <sup>4</sup> Delight yourself | in the LORD,\*  
and he will give you  
the desires | of your heart.
- <sup>5</sup> Commit your way | to the LORD;\*  
trust in him, and | he will act.
- <sup>6</sup> He will bring forth your righteousness | as  
the light,\*  
and your justice as the | noonday.
- <sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD  
and wait patiently | for him;\*  
fret not yourself over the one who  
prosperes in his way, over the man  
who carries out evil de- | vices!
- <sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger, and for- | sake wrath!\*  
Fret not yourself; it tends only to | evil.
- <sup>9</sup> For the evildoers shall be | cut off,\*  
but those who wait for the LORD  
shall inher- | it the land.
- <sup>10</sup> In just a little while,  
the wicked will | be no more;\*  
though you look carefully at his place,  
he will | not be there.
- <sup>11</sup> But the meek shall inher- | it the land\*  
and delight themselves  
in a- | bundant peace.
- <sup>12</sup> The wicked plots against the | righteous\*  
and gnashes his | teeth at him,  
<sup>13</sup> but the Lord laughs at the | wicked,\*  
for he sees that his day is | coming.

- 14 The wicked draw the sword  
and | bend their bows\*  
to bring down the poor and needy,  
to slay those whose way is | upright;
- 15 their sword shall enter | their own heart,\*  
and their bows shall be | broken.
- 16 Better is the little that the | righteous has\*  
than the abundance of many | wicked.
- 17 For the arms of the wicked  
shall be | broken,\*  
but the LORD upholds the | righteous.
- 18 The LORD knows the days  
of the | blameless,\*  
and their heritage will remain for- | ever;  
19 they are not put to shame in | evil times;\*  
in the days of famine  
they have a- | bundance.
- 20 But the wicked will perish;  
the enemies of the LORD  
are like the glory of the | pastures,\*  
they vanish—like smoke  
they van- | ish away.
- 21 The wicked borrows  
but does | not pay back,\*  
but the righteous  
is gener- | ous and gives;
- 22 for those blessed by the LORD  
shall inher- | it the land,\*  
but those cursed by him shall | be cut off.
- 23 The steps of a man are  
established | by the LORD,\*  
when he delights | in his way;
- 24 though he fall, he shall not  
be cast | headlong,\*  
for the LORD up- | holds his hand.
- 25 I have been young, and | now am old,\*  
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken  
or his children beg- | ging for bread.
- 26 He is ever lending | generously,\*  
and his children become a | blessing.
- 27 Turn away from evil | and do good,\*  
so shall you dwell for- | ever.
- 28 For the LORD loves justice;  
he will not forsake his saints.  
They are preserved for- | ever,\*  
but the children of the wicked  
shall | be cut off.
- 29 The righteous shall inher- | it the land\*  
and dwell upon it for- | ever.
- 30 The mouth of the righteous  
utters | wisdom,\*  
and his tongue speaks | justice.
- 31 The law of his God is | in his heart,\*  
his steps | do not slip.
- 32 The wicked watches for the | righteous\*  
and seeks to put | him to death.
- 33 The LORD will not abandon him | to  
his power\*  
or let him be condemned  
when he is | brought to trial.
- 34 Wait for the LORD and keep his way,  
and he will exalt you to inher- | it the land;\*  
you will look on when  
the wicked | are cut off.
- 35 I have seen a wicked, | ruthless man,\*  
spreading himself like a  
green | laurel tree.
- 36 But he passed away, and behold,  
he | was no more;\*  
though I sought him,  
he could | not be found.
- 37 Mark the blameless and  
behold the | upright,\*  
for there is a future  
for the | man of peace.
- 38 But transgressors shall be  
altogether | destroyed,\*  
the future of the wicked shall | be cut off.
- 39 The salvation of the righteous  
is | from the LORD,\*  
he is their stronghold  
in the time of | trouble.
- 40 The LORD helps them and  
de- | livers them;\*

he delivers them from the wicked  
and saves them, because they  
take refuge in him.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 38

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, rebuke me not in your | anger,\*  
nor discipline me | in your wrath!  
<sup>2</sup> For your arrows have sunk | into me,\*  
and your hand has come | down on me.  
<sup>3</sup> There is no soundness in my flesh  
because of your indig- | nation;\*  
there is no health in my bones  
because | of my sin.  
<sup>4</sup> For my iniquities have gone  
o- | ver my head,\*  
like a heavy burden,  
they are too heav- | y for me.  
<sup>5</sup> My wounds stink and | fester\*  
because of my | foolishness,  
<sup>6</sup> I am utterly bowed down and | prostrate,\*  
all the day I go about | mourning.  
<sup>7</sup> For my sides are filled with | burning,\*  
and there is no soundness | in my flesh.  
<sup>8</sup> I am feeble | and crushed;\*  
I groan because of the  
tumult | of my heart.  
<sup>9</sup> O Lord, all my longing is be- | fore you;\*  
my sighing is not hid- | den from you.  
<sup>10</sup> My heart throbs; my strength | fails me,\*  
and the light of my eyes—it  
also has | gone from me.  
<sup>11</sup> My friends and companions stand  
aloof | from my plague,\*  
and my nearest kin stand | far off.  
<sup>12</sup> Those who seek my life lay their snares;  
those who seek my hurt speak of | ruin\*  
and meditate treachery | all day long.

<sup>13</sup> But I am like a deaf man; I | do not hear,\*  
like a mute man who does not  
o- | pen his mouth.

<sup>14</sup> I have become like a man  
who | does not hear,\*  
and in whose mouth are | no rebukes.

<sup>15</sup> But for you, O LORD, | do I wait,\*  
it is you, O Lord my God,  
who will | answer.

<sup>16</sup> For I said, “Only let them not  
rejoice | over me,\*  
who boast against me  
when my | foot slips!”

<sup>17</sup> For I am read- | y to fall,\*  
and my pain is ever be- | fore me.

<sup>18</sup> I confess my in- | iquity;\*  
I am sorry | for my sin.

<sup>19</sup> But my foes are vigorous,  
they are | mighty,\*  
and many are those  
who hate me | wrongfully.

<sup>20</sup> Those who render me e- | vil for good\*  
accuse me because I follow | after good.

<sup>21</sup> Do not forsake me, | O LORD!\*  
O my God, be not | far from me!

<sup>22</sup> Make haste to | help me,\*  
O Lord, my sal- | vation!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 39

<sup>1</sup> I said, “I will guard my ways,  
that I may not sin | with my tongue;\*  
I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so  
long as the wicked are in my | presence.”

<sup>2</sup> I was mute and silent;  
I held my peace to | no avail,\*  
and my dis- | tress grew worse.

<sup>3</sup> My heart became hot within me. As I  
mused, the | fire burned;\*  
then I spoke | with my tongue:  
<sup>4</sup> “O LORD, make me know my end  
and what is the measure | of my days;\*  
let me know how fleeting | I am!  
<sup>5</sup> Behold, you have made my days  
a few | handbreadths,\*  
and my lifetime is as nothing be- | fore you.  
Surely all mankind stands  
as a | mere breath!\*

<sup>6</sup> Surely a man goes about as a | shadow!  
Surely for nothing they are in | turmoil;\*  
man heaps up wealth and does not know  
who will | gather!  
<sup>7</sup> “And now, O Lord, for what | do I wait?\*

My hope | is in you.  
<sup>8</sup> Deliver me from all my trans- | gressions.\*  
Do not make me the scorn | of the fool!  
<sup>9</sup> I am mute; I do not open | my mouth,\*  
for it is you who have | done it.  
<sup>10</sup> Remove your | stroke from me;\*  
I am spent by the hostility | of your hand.  
<sup>11</sup> When you discipline a man with rebukes  
for sin, you consume like a moth  
what is | dear to him;\*  
surely all mankind is a | mere breath!  
<sup>12</sup> “Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to  
my cry; hold not your peace | at my tears!\*

For I am a sojourner with you, a guest,  
like all my | fathers.  
<sup>13</sup> Look away from me,  
that I may | smile again,\*  
before I depart and | am no more!”

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

40

<sup>1</sup> I waited patiently | for the LORD;\*  
he inclined to me and | heard my cry.  
<sup>2</sup> He drew me up from the pit of destruction,  
out of the | miry bog,\*  
and set my feet upon a rock,  
making my | steps secure.  
<sup>3</sup> He put a new song in my mouth,  
a song of praise | to our God.\*  
Many will see and fear, and put their  
trust | in the LORD.  
<sup>4</sup> Blessed is the man who makes  
the | LORD his trust,\*  
who does not turn to the proud,  
to those who go astray af- | ter a lie!  
<sup>5</sup> You have multiplied, O LORD my God,  
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts  
toward us; none can com- | pare with you!\*

I will proclaim and tell of them,  
yet they are more than | can be told.  
<sup>6</sup> Sacrifice and offering you have not desired,  
but you have given me an | open ear.\*  
Burnt offering and sin offering  
you have | not required.  
<sup>7</sup> Then I said, “Behold, | I have come,\*  
in the scroll of the book it is writ- | ten of me:  
<sup>8</sup> I desire to do your will, | O my God;\*  
your law is with- | in my heart.”  
<sup>9</sup> I have told the glad news of deliverance  
in the great congre- | gation;\*  
behold, I have not restrained my lips,  
as you know, | O LORD.  
<sup>10</sup> I have not hidden your deliverance  
within my heart; I have spoken of your  
faithfulness and your sal- | vation;\*  
I have not concealed your steadfast  
love and your faithfulness from  
the great congre- | gation.  
<sup>11</sup> As for you, O LORD, you will not restrain  
your mer- | cy from me;\*  
your steadfast love and your faithfulness  
will ever pre- | serve me!

- <sup>12</sup> For evils have encompassed me beyond number; my iniquities have overtaken me, and I | cannot see;\*  
they are more than the hairs of my head; my heart | fails me.
- <sup>13</sup> Be pleased, O LORD, to de- | liver me!\*  
O LORD, make haste to | help me!
- <sup>14</sup> Let those be put to shame and disappointed altogether who seek to snatch a- | way my life;\*  
let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who de- | sire my hurt!
- <sup>15</sup> Let those be appalled because | of their shame\*  
who say to me, “A- | ha, Aha!”
- <sup>16</sup> But may all who seek you rejoice and be | glad in you;\*  
may those who love your salvation say continually, “Great | is the LORD!”
- <sup>17</sup> As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes | thought for me.\*  
You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, | O my God!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 41

- <sup>1</sup> Blessèd is the one who consid- | ers the poor!\*  
In the day of trouble the LORD de- | livers him;
- <sup>2</sup> the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessèd | in the land;\*  
you do not give him up to the will of his | enemies.

- <sup>3</sup> The LORD sustains him on his | sickbed;\*  
in his illness you restore him to | full health.
- <sup>4</sup> As for me, I said, “O LORD, be gra- | cious to me;\*  
heal me, for I have sinned a- | gainst you!”
- <sup>5</sup> My enemies say of me in | malice,\*  
“When will he die and his name | perish?”
- <sup>6</sup> And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while his heart gathers in- | iquity;\*  
when he goes out, he tells | it abroad.
- <sup>7</sup> All who hate me whisper together a- | bout me;\*  
they imagine the | worst for me.
- <sup>8</sup> They say, “A deadly thing is poured | out on him;\*  
he will not rise again from | where he lies.”
- <sup>9</sup> Even my close friend in whom I | trusted,\*  
who ate my bread, has lifted his heel a- | gainst me.
- <sup>10</sup> But you, O LORD, be gra- | cious to me,\*  
and raise me up, that I may re- | pay them!
- <sup>11</sup> By this I know that you de- | light in me:\*  
my enemy will not shout in triumph | over me.
- <sup>12</sup> But you have upheld me because of my in- | tegrity,\*  
and set me in your presence for- | ever.
- <sup>13</sup> Blessèd be the LORD, the God of | Israel,\*  
from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and | Amen.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 42

- <sup>1</sup> As a deer pants for | flowing streams,\*  
so pants my soul for you, | O God.
- <sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God,  
for the | living God.\*  
When shall I come and  
appear be- | fore God?
- <sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food | day and night,\*  
while they say to me continually,  
“Where | is your God?”
- <sup>4</sup> These things I remember,  
as I pour | out my soul:\*  
how I would go with the throng and lead  
them in procession to the | house of God  
with glad shouts and | songs of praise,\*  
a multitude keeping | festival.
- <sup>5</sup> Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you in turmoil with- | in me?\*
- Hope in God; for I shall again praise  
him, my salvation | <sup>6</sup> and my God.  
My soul is cast down with- | in me;\*  
therefore I remember you from the land  
of Jordan and of Hermon,  
from Mount | Mizar.
- <sup>7</sup> Deep calls to deep at the roar  
of your | waterfalls,\*  
all your breakers and your waves  
have gone | over me.
- <sup>8</sup> By day the LORD commands his steadfast  
love, and at night his song is | with me,\*  
a prayer to the God | of my life.
- <sup>9</sup> I say to God, my rock:  
“Why have you for- | gotten me?\*
- Why do I go mourning because  
of the oppression of the | enemy?”
- <sup>10</sup> As with a deadly wound in my bones,  
my adversaries | taunt me,\*  
while they say to me continually,  
“Where | is your God?”

- <sup>11</sup> Why are you cast down, O my soul, and  
why are you in turmoil with- | in me?\*
- Hope in God; for I shall again praise  
him, my salvation | and my God.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 43

- <sup>1</sup> Vindicate me, O God, and defend  
my cause against an ungodly | people,\*  
from the deceitful and unjust  
man de- | liver me!
- <sup>2</sup> For you are the God in whom I take refuge;  
why have you re- | jected me?\*
- Why do I go about mourning because  
of the oppression of the | enemy?
- <sup>3</sup> Send out your light and your truth;  
let them | lead me;\*
- let them bring me to your holy hill  
and to your | dwelling!
- <sup>4</sup> Then I will go to the altar of God,  
to God my ex- | ceeding joy,\*  
and I will praise you with the lyre,  
O | God, my God.
- <sup>5</sup> Why are you cast down, O my soul, and  
why are you in turmoil with- | in me?\*
- Hope in God; for I shall again praise  
him, my salvation | and my God.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 44

- <sup>1</sup> O God, we have heard with our ears,  
our fathers have | told us,\*  
what deeds you performed in their days,  
in the | days of old:
- <sup>2</sup> you with your own hand drove out the  
nations, but them you | planted;\*  
you afflicted the peoples,  
but them you | set free;
- <sup>3</sup> for not by their own sword did they win the  
land, nor did their own arm | save them,\*  
but your right hand and your arm,  
and the light of your face,  
for you de- | lighted in them.
- <sup>4</sup> You are my King, | O God;\*  
ordain salvation for | Jacob!
- <sup>5</sup> Through you we push | down our foes;\*  
through your name we tread down  
those who rise up a- | gainst us.
- <sup>6</sup> For not in my bow | do I trust,\*  
nor can my sword | save me.
- <sup>7</sup> But you have saved us | from our foes\*  
and have put to shame  
those who | hate us.
- <sup>8</sup> In God we have boasted con- | tinually,\*  
and we will give thanks  
to your name for- | ever.
- <sup>9</sup> But you have rejected us and dis- | graced us\*  
and have not gone out with our | armies.
- <sup>10</sup> You have made us turn back | from the foe,\*  
and those who hate us have | gotten spoil.
- <sup>11</sup> You have made us like sheep for | slaughter\*  
and have scattered us among the | nations.
- <sup>12</sup> You have sold your people for a | trifle,\*  
demanding no high | price for them.
- <sup>13</sup> You have made us the taunt  
of our | neighbors,\*  
the derision and scorn  
of those a- | round us.
- <sup>14</sup> You have made us a byword  
among the | nations,\*  
a laughingstock among the | peoples.
- <sup>15</sup> All day long my disgrace is be- | fore me,\*  
and shame has cov- | ered my face
- <sup>16</sup> at the sound of the taunter and re- | viler,\*  
at the sight of the enemy  
and the a- | venger.
- <sup>17</sup> All this has come upon us, though we have  
not for- | gotten you,\*  
and we have not been false  
to your | covenant.
- <sup>18</sup> Our heart has | not turned back,\*  
nor have our steps departed | from  
your way;
- <sup>19</sup> yet you have broken us  
in the place of | jackals\*  
and covered us with  
the shad- | ow of death.
- <sup>20</sup> If we had forgotten the name | of our God\*  
or spread out our hands to a | foreign god,
- <sup>21</sup> would not God dis- | cover this?\*  
For he knows the secrets | of the heart.
- <sup>22</sup> Yet for your sake we are killed  
all the | day long,\*  
we are regarded as sheep  
to be | slaughtered.
- <sup>23</sup> Awake! Why are you sleeping, | O Lord?\*  
Rouse yourself!  
Do not reject us for- | ever!
- <sup>24</sup> Why do you | hide your face?\*  
Why do you forget our affliction  
and op- | pression?
- <sup>25</sup> For our soul is bowed down | to the dust;\*  
our belly clings | to the ground.
- <sup>26</sup> Rise up; come | to our help!\*  
Redeem us for the sake  
of your | steadfast love!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

45

- <sup>1</sup> My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;  
I address my verses | to the king;\*  
my tongue is like the pen  
of a | ready scribe.
- <sup>2</sup> You are the most handsome of the sons  
of men; grace is poured up- | on your lips;\*  
therefore God has blessed you for- | ever.
- <sup>3</sup> Gird your sword on your thigh,  
O | mighty one,\*  
in your splendor and | majesty!
- <sup>4</sup> In your majesty ride out victoriously  
for the cause of truth and meekness  
and | righteousness;\*  
let your right hand teach  
you | awesome deeds!
- <sup>5</sup> Your arrows are sharp in the heart  
of the king's | enemies;\*  
the peoples fall | under you.
- <sup>6</sup> Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.  
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter  
of up- | rightness;\*  
<sup>7</sup> you have loved righteousness  
and hated | wickedness.  
Therefore God, your God,  
has anointed you with the oil  
of gladness beyond your com- | panions;\*  
<sup>8</sup> your robes are all fragrant  
with myrrh and aloes and | cassia.  
From ivory palaces stringed  
instruments | make you glad;\*  
<sup>9</sup> daughters of kings are among your  
ladies of honor; at your right hand stands  
the queen in gold of | Ophir.
- <sup>10</sup> Hear, O daughter, and consider,  
and in- | cline your ear.\*  
forget your people and your | father's house,  
<sup>11</sup> and the king will desire your | beauty.\*  
Since he is your lord, | bow to him.
- <sup>12</sup> The people of Tyre will seek  
your fa- | vor with gifts,\*  
the richest of the | people.

- <sup>13</sup> All glorious is the princess in her chamber,  
with robes interwoven | with gold.\*  
<sup>14</sup> In many-colored robes she is led to  
the king, with her virgin companions  
following be- | hind her.
- <sup>15</sup> With joy and gladness they are | led along\*  
as they enter the palace | of the king.
- <sup>16</sup> In place of your fathers shall | be your sons;\*  
you will make them princes  
in | all the earth.
- <sup>17</sup> I will cause your name to be remembered  
in all gener- | ations;\*  
therefore nations will praise you  
forever and | ever.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

46

- <sup>1</sup> God is our ref- | uge and strength,\*  
a very present help in | trouble.
- <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear  
though the | earth gives way,\*  
though the mountains be moved  
into the heart | of the sea,
- <sup>3</sup> though its waters | roar and foam,\*  
though the mountains tremble  
at its | swelling.
- <sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams  
make glad the cit- | y of God,\*  
the holy habitation of the | Most High.
- <sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of her;  
she shall | not be moved;\*  
God will help her when | morning dawns.
- <sup>6</sup> The nations rage, the kingdoms | totter;\*  
he utters his voice, the | earth melts.
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is | with us;\*  
the God of Jacob is our | fortress.
- <sup>8</sup> Come, behold the works | of the LORD,\*  
how he has brought desolations | on  
the earth.

<sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the end | of  
the earth;\*  
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the chariots | with fire.  
<sup>10</sup> “Be still, and know that | I am God.\*  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted | in the earth!”  
<sup>11</sup> The LORD of hosts is | with us;\*  
the God of Jacob is our | fortress.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 47

<sup>1</sup> Clap your hands, all | peoples!\*  
Shout to God with loud | songs of joy!  
<sup>2</sup> For the LORD, the Most High, is | to be  
feared,\*  
a great king over | all the earth.  
<sup>3</sup> He subdued peoples | under us,\*  
and nations un- | der our feet.  
<sup>4</sup> He chose our heritage | for us,\*  
the pride of Jacob | whom he loves.  
<sup>5</sup> God has gone up | with a shout,\*  
the LORD with the sound of a | trumpet.  
<sup>6</sup> Sing praises to God, sing | praises!\*  
Sing praises to our King, sing | praises!  
<sup>7</sup> For God is the King of | all the earth;\*  
sing praises | with a psalm!  
<sup>8</sup> God reigns over the | nations;\*  
God sits on his | holy throne.  
<sup>9</sup> The princes of the peoples gather as the  
people of the God of | Abraham.\*  
For the shields of the earth belong to  
God; he is highly ex- | alted!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 48

<sup>1</sup> Great is the LORD and greatly | to be praised\*  
in the city | of our God!  
His holy mountain, <sup>2</sup> beautiful in elevation,  
is the joy of | all the earth,\*  
Mount Zion, in the far north,  
the city of the | great King.  
<sup>3</sup> Within her | citadels\*  
God has made himself known  
as a | fortress.  
<sup>4</sup> For behold, the kings as- | sembled;\*  
they came on to- | gether.  
<sup>5</sup> As soon as they saw it,  
they were as- | tounded;\*  
they were in panic; they | took to flight.  
<sup>6</sup> Trembling took hold | of them there,\*  
anguish as of a woman in | labor.  
<sup>7</sup> By the | east wind\*  
you shattered the ships of | Tarshish.  
<sup>8</sup> As we have heard, so have we seen in  
the city of the LORD of hosts,  
in the city | of our God,\*  
which God will establish for- | ever.  
<sup>9</sup> We have thought on your steadfast  
love, | O God,\*  
in the midst of your | temple.  
<sup>10</sup> As your name, O God, so your praise  
reaches to the ends | of the earth.\*  
Your right hand is filled  
with | righteousness.  
<sup>11</sup> Let Mount Zion | be glad!\*  
Let the daughters of Judah rejoice  
because of your | judgments!  
<sup>12</sup> Walk about Zion, go around her,  
number her | towers,\*  
<sup>13</sup> consider well her ramparts,  
go through her | citadels,  
that you may tell the next generation  
<sup>14</sup> that this is God, our God forever and | ever.\*  
He will guide us for- | ever.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**49**

- <sup>1</sup> Hear this, all | peoples!\*  
Give ear, all inhabitants | of the world,  
<sup>2</sup> both | low and high,\*  
rich and poor to- | gether!  
<sup>3</sup> My mouth shall speak | wisdom;\*  
the meditation of my heart  
shall be under- | standing.  
<sup>4</sup> I will incline my ear to a | proverb;\*  
I will solve my riddle  
to the music | of the lyre.  
<sup>5</sup> Why should I fear in times of | trouble,\*  
when the iniquity of those  
who cheat me sur- | rounds me,  
<sup>6</sup> those who trust | in their wealth\*  
and boast of the abundance  
of their | riches?  
<sup>7</sup> Truly no man can ransom an- | other,\*  
or give to God the price | of his life,  
<sup>8</sup> for the ransom of their life is | costly\*  
and can nev- | er suffice,  
<sup>9</sup> that he should live on for- | ever\*  
and never | see the pit.  
<sup>10</sup> For he sees that even the | wise die;\*  
the fool and the stupid alike must perish  
and leave their wealth to | others.  
<sup>11</sup> Their graves are their homes forever,  
their dwelling places to all gener- | ations,\*  
though they called lands  
by their | own names.  
<sup>12</sup> Man in his pomp will | not remain;\*  
he is like the beasts that | perish.  
<sup>13</sup> This is the path of those who  
have foolish | confidence;\*  
yet after them people approve | of  
their boasts.

<sup>14</sup> Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol;  
death shall be their | shepherd,\*  
and the upright shall rule over them in the  
morning. Their form shall be consumed  
in Sheol, with no | place to dwell.

<sup>15</sup> But God will ransom my soul  
from the power | of Sheol,\*  
for he will re- | ceive me.

<sup>16</sup> Be not afraid when a man be- | comes rich,\*  
when the glory of his house in- | creases.

<sup>17</sup> For when he dies he will carry  
noth- | ing away;\*  
his glory will not go down | after him.

<sup>18</sup> For though, while he lives,  
he counts himself | blessed,—\*  
and though you get praise  
when you do well | for yourself—

<sup>19</sup> his soul will go to the generation  
of his | fathers,\*  
who will never again | see light.

<sup>20</sup> Man in his pomp yet without  
under- | standing\*  
is like the beasts that | perish.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**50**

<sup>1</sup> The Mighty One, God the LORD,  
speaks and sum- | mons the earth\*  
from the rising of the sun to its | setting.

<sup>2</sup> Out of Zion, the perfection of | beauty,\*  
God | shines forth.

<sup>3</sup> Our God comes; he does not keep | silence;\*  
before him is a devouring fire,  
around him a mighty | tempest.

<sup>4</sup> He calls to the heav- | ens above\*  
 and to the earth,  
 that he may judge his | people:  
<sup>5</sup> “Gather to me my | faithful ones,\*  
 who made a covenant  
 with me by | sacrifice!”  
<sup>6</sup> The heavens declare his | righteousness,\*  
 for God him- | self is judge!  
<sup>7</sup> “Hear, O my people, and I will speak;  
 O Israel, I will testify a- | gainst you.\*  
 I am | God, your God.  
<sup>8</sup> Not for your sacrifices do I re- | buke you;\*  
 your burnt offerings are  
 continually be- | fore me.  
<sup>9</sup> I will not accept a bull | from your house\*  
 or goats | from your folds.  
<sup>10</sup> For every beast of the for- | est is mine,\*  
 the cattle on a | thousand hills.  
<sup>11</sup> I know all the birds | of the hills,\*  
 and all that moves in the | field is mine.  
<sup>12</sup> “If I were hungry, I would not | tell you,\*  
 for the world and its full- | ness are mine.  
<sup>13</sup> Do I eat the | flesh of bulls\*  
 or drink the | blood of goats?  
<sup>14</sup> Offer to God a sacrifice of thanks- | giving,\*  
 and perform your vows  
 to the | Most High,  
<sup>15</sup> and call upon me in the day of | trouble;\*  
 I will deliver you,  
 and you shall glo- | rify me.”  
<sup>16</sup> But to the wicked | God says:\*  
 “What right have you to recite my  
 statutes or take my covenant | on your lips?  
<sup>17</sup> For you hate | discipline,\*  
 and you cast my words be- | hind you.  
<sup>18</sup> If you see a thief, you are | pleased with him,\*  
 and you keep company  
 with a- | dulterers.  
<sup>19</sup> “You give your mouth free rein for | evil,\*  
 and your tongue | frames deceit.

<sup>20</sup> You sit and speak against your | brother,\*  
 you slander your own | mother’s son.  
<sup>21</sup> These things you have done,  
 and I have been silent;  
 you thought that I was one | like yourself.\*  
 But now I rebuke you  
 and lay the charge be- | fore you.  
<sup>22</sup> “Mark this, then, you who for- | get God,\*  
 lest I tear you apart,  
 and there be none to de- | liver!  
<sup>23</sup> The one who offers thanksgiving  
 as his sacrifice glo- | rifies me;\*  
 to one who orders his way rightly  
 I will show the salva- | tion of God!”  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 51

<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God,  
 according to your | steadfast love,\*  
 according to your abundant mercy blot  
 out my trans- | gressions.  
<sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my in- | iquity,\*  
 and cleanse me | from my sin!  
<sup>3</sup> For I know my trans- | gressions,\*  
 and my sin is ever be- | fore me.  
<sup>4</sup> 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.  
<sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in in- | iquity,\*  
 and in sin did my mother con- | ceive me.  
<sup>6</sup> Behold, you delight in truth  
 in the inward | being,\*  
 and you teach me wisdom  
 in the | secret heart.  
<sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;\*  
 wash me, and I shall be  
 whit- | er than snow.

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and | gladness;\*  
 let the bones that you  
 have bro- | ken rejoice.

<sup>9</sup> Hide your face | from my sins,\*  
 and blot out all my in- | iquities.

<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, | O God,\*  
 and renew a right spirit with- | in me.

<sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from your | presence,\*  
 and take not your Holy Spirit | from me.

<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your sal- | vation,\*  
 and uphold me with a willing | spirit.

<sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors | your ways,\*  
 and sinners will re- | turn to you.

<sup>14</sup> Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,  
 O God of my sal- | vation,\*  
 and my tongue will sing aloud  
 of your | righteousness.

<sup>15</sup> O Lord, open | my lips,\*  
 and my mouth will de- | clare your praise.

<sup>16</sup> For you will not delight in sacrifice,  
 or I would | give it;\*  
 you will not be pleased  
 with a burnt | offering.

<sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken | spirit;\*  
 a broken and contrite heart,  
 O God, you will | not despise.

<sup>18</sup> Do good to Zion in your good | pleasure;\*  
 build up the walls of Je- | rusalem;

<sup>19</sup> then will you delight in right sacrifices, in  
 burnt offerings and whole burnt | offerings,\*  
 then bulls will be offered on your | altar.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

52

<sup>1</sup> Why do you boast of evil, O | mighty  
 man?\*

The steadfast love of God  
 endures | all the day.

<sup>2</sup> Your tongue plots de- | struction,\*  
 like a sharp razor, you worker | of deceit.

<sup>3</sup> You love evil | more than good,\*  
 and lying more than  
 speaking | what is right.

<sup>4</sup> You love all words | that devour,\*  
 O de- | ceitful tongue.

<sup>5</sup> But God will break you down for- | ever;\*  
 he will snatch and tear you  
 from your tent; he will uproot you  
 from the land of the | living.

<sup>6</sup> The righteous shall | see and fear,\*  
 and shall laugh at him, | saying,

<sup>7</sup> “See the man who would not make God  
 his | refuge,\*  
 but trusted in the abundance of his  
 riches and sought refuge  
 in his own de- | struction!”

<sup>8</sup> But I am like a green olive tree  
 in the | house of God.\*  
 I trust in the steadfast love  
 of God forever and | ever.

<sup>9</sup> I will thank you forever,  
 because you have | done it.\*  
 I will wait for your name, for it is good,  
 in the presence of the | godly.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 53

- <sup>1</sup> The fool says in his heart, "There | is no God."\*  
They are corrupt, doing abominable  
iniquity; there is none | who does good.
- <sup>2</sup> God looks down from heaven  
on the chil- | dren of man\*  
to see if there are any who understand,  
who seek | after God.
- <sup>3</sup> They have all fallen away;  
together they have be- | come corrupt,\*  
there is none who does good,  
not | even one.
- <sup>4</sup> Have those who work evil no | knowledge,\*  
who eat up my people as they eat bread,  
and do not call up- | on God?
- <sup>5</sup> There they are, in great terror,  
where there is no | terror!\*
- For God scatters the bones of him who  
encamps against you; you put them  
to shame, for God has re- | jected them.
- <sup>6</sup> Oh, that salvation for Israel  
would come out of | Zion!\*
- When God restores the fortunes  
of his people, let Jacob rejoice,  
let Israel | be glad.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 54

- <sup>1</sup> O God, save me, | by your name,\*  
and vindicate me | by your might.
- <sup>2</sup> O God, | hear my prayer,\*  
give ear to the words | of my mouth.
- <sup>3</sup> For strangers have risen against me;  
ruthless men | seek my life;\*  
they do not set God be- | fore themselves.
- <sup>4</sup> Behold, God is my | helper;\*  
the Lord is the upholder | of my life.
- <sup>5</sup> He will return the evil to my | enemies;\*  
in your faithfulness put an | end to them.

- <sup>6</sup> With a freewill offering I  
will sacri- | fice to you,\*  
I will give thanks to your name,  
O LORD, for | it is good.
- <sup>7</sup> For he has delivered me  
from every | trouble,\*  
and my eye has looked in triumph  
on my | enemies.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 55

- <sup>1</sup> Give ear to my prayer, | O God,\*  
and hide not yourself  
from my plea for | mercy!
- <sup>2</sup> Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless  
in my complaint | and I moan,\*  
<sup>3</sup> because of the noise of the enemy,  
because of the oppression of the | wicked.
- For they drop trouble up- | on me,\*  
and in anger they bear a grudge  
a- | gainst me.
- <sup>4</sup> My heart is in anguish with- | in me,\*  
the terrors of death have fallen up- | on me.
- <sup>5</sup> Fear and trembling come up- | on me,\*  
and horror over- | whelms me.
- <sup>6</sup> And I say, "Oh, that I had wings | like a dove!\*"  
I would fly away and | be at rest;
- <sup>7</sup> yes, I would wander | far away;\*  
I would lodge in the | wilderness;
- <sup>8</sup> I would hurry to find a | shelter\*  
from the raging wind and | tempest."
- <sup>9</sup> Destroy, O Lord, di- | vide their tongues,\*  
for I see violence and strife in the | city.
- <sup>10</sup> Day and night they go around it | on  
its walls,\*  
and iniquity and trouble are with- | in it;
- <sup>11</sup> ruin is | in its midst,\*  
oppression and fraud do not depart  
from its | marketplace.

<sup>12</sup> For it is not an enemy who taunts me—  
then I could | bear it;\*  
it is not an adversary who deals insolently  
with me—then I could | hide from him.

<sup>13</sup> But it is you, a man, my | equal,\*  
my companion, my fa- | miliar friend.

<sup>14</sup> We used to take sweet counsel to- | gether;\*  
within God's house we walked | in  
the throng.

<sup>15</sup> Let death steal over them;  
let them go down to She- | ol alive;\*  
for evil is in their dwelling place  
and | in their heart.

<sup>16</sup> But I | call to God,\*  
and the LORD will | save me.

<sup>17</sup> Evening and morning and at noon  
I utter my com- | plaint and moan,\*  
and he | hears my voice.

<sup>18</sup> He redeems my soul in safety  
from the battle | that I wage,\*  
for many are arrayed a- | gainst me.

<sup>19</sup> God will give ear and humble them,  
he who is enthroned | from of old,\*  
because they do not change  
and do | not fear God.

<sup>20</sup> My companion stretched out his hand  
a- | gainst his friends;\*  
he violated his | covenant.

<sup>21</sup> His speech was smooth as butter,  
yet war was | in his heart;\*  
his words were softer than oil,  
yet they were | drawn swords.

<sup>22</sup> Cast your burden on the LORD,  
and he will sus- | tain you;\*  
he will never permit the righteous  
to | be moved.

<sup>23</sup> But you, O God, will cast them down into  
the pit of destruction; men of blood and  
treachery shall not live out | half their days.\*  
But I will | trust in you.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;**

**as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**56**

<sup>1</sup> Be gracious to me, O God, for man  
tramples | on me;\*  
all day long an attacker op- | presses me;

<sup>2</sup> my enemies trample on me | all day long,\*  
for many attack me | proudly.

<sup>3</sup> When I | am afraid,\*  
I put my | trust in you.

<sup>4</sup> In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust;  
I shall not | be afraid.\*  
What can flesh | do to me?

<sup>5</sup> All day long they in- | jure my cause;\*  
all their thoughts are against me for | evil.

<sup>6</sup> They stir up strife, they lurk; they | watch  
my steps,\*  
as they have waited | for my life.

<sup>7</sup> For their crime will | they escape?\*

In wrath cast down the peoples, | O God!

<sup>8</sup> You have kept count of my tossings;  
put my tears in your | bottle.\*  
Are they not | in your book?

<sup>9</sup> Then my enemies will turn back  
in the day | when I call.\*  
This I know, that God is | for me.

<sup>10</sup> In God, whose | word I praise,\*  
in the LORD, whose | word I praise,

<sup>11</sup> in God I trust; I shall not | be afraid.\*  
What can man | do to me?

<sup>12</sup> I must perform my vows to you, | O God;\*  
I will render thank offerings | to you.

<sup>13</sup> For you have delivered my soul from death,  
yes, my feet from | falling,\*  
that I may walk before God  
in the | light of life.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 57

- <sup>1</sup> Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful  
to me, for in you my soul takes | refuge;\*  
in the shadow of your wings  
I will take refuge, till the storms  
of destruction | pass by.
- <sup>2</sup> I cry out to | God Most High,\*  
to God who fulfills his pur- | pose for me.
- <sup>3</sup> He will send from heaven and save me;  
he will put to shame him who  
tramples | on me.\*  
God will send out his steadfast love  
and his | faithfulness!
- <sup>4</sup> My soul is in the midst of lions;  
I lie down amid | fiery beasts—\*  
the children of man,  
whose teeth are spears and arrows,  
whose tongues are | sharp swords.
- <sup>5</sup> Be exalted, O God, above the | heavens!\*  
Let your glory be over | all the earth!
- <sup>6</sup> They set a net for my steps;  
my soul was | bowed down.\*  
They dug a pit in my way, but they have  
fallen into it | themselves.
- <sup>7</sup> My heart is steadfast, O God,  
my heart is | steadfast!\*  
I will sing and make | melody!
- <sup>8</sup> Awake, my glory! Awake, O | harp and lyre!\*  
I will a- | wake the dawn!
- <sup>9</sup> I will give thanks to you, O Lord,  
among the | peoples,\*  
I will sing praises to you among  
the | nations.
- <sup>10</sup> For your steadfast love is great  
to the | heavens,\*  
your faithfulness | to the clouds.
- <sup>11</sup> Be exalted, O God, above the | heavens!\*  
Let your glory be over | all the earth!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 58

- <sup>1</sup> Do you indeed decree what is | right,  
you gods?\*
- Do you judge the children  
of man up- | rightly?
- <sup>2</sup> No, in your hearts you de- | vise wrongs;\*  
your hands deal out violence | on earth.
- <sup>3</sup> The wicked are estranged | from the womb;\*  
they go astray from birth, | speaking lies.
- <sup>4</sup> They have venom like the venom  
of a | serpent,\*  
like the deaf adder that | stops its ear,  
<sup>5</sup> so that it does not hear the voice  
of | charmers\*  
or of the cunning en- | chanter.
- <sup>6</sup> O God, break the teeth | in their mouths;\*  
tear out the fangs of the young lions, | O  
LORD!
- <sup>7</sup> Let them vanish like water that | runs away;\*  
when he aims his arrows,  
let them be | blunted.
- <sup>8</sup> Let them be like the snail  
that dissolves | into slime,\*  
like the stillborn child who  
never | sees the sun.
- <sup>9</sup> Sooner than your pots  
can feel the | heat of thorns,\*  
whether green or ablaze,  
may he sweep | them away!
- <sup>10</sup> The righteous will rejoice  
when he sees the | vengeance;\*  
he will bathe his feet in the blood  
of the | wicked.
- <sup>11</sup> Mankind will say, "Surely there  
is a reward for the | righteous;\*  
surely there is a God  
who judges | on earth."  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

59

- <sup>1</sup> Deliver me from my enemies, | O my God;\*  
protect me from those  
who rise up a- | gainst me;
- <sup>2</sup> deliver me from those who work | evil,\*  
and save me from blood- | thirsty men.
- <sup>3</sup> For behold, they lie in wait for my life;  
fierce men stir up strife a- | gainst me.\*  
For no transgression or sin of mine,  
O LORD, <sup>4</sup> for no fault of mine,  
they run and make | ready.  
Awake, come to meet | me, and see!\*
- <sup>5</sup> You, LORD God of hosts,  
are God of | Israel.  
Rouse yourself to punish all the | nations;\*  
spare none of those who  
treacherously plot | evil.
- <sup>6</sup> Each evening they come back,  
howl- | ing like dogs\*  
and prowling about the | city.
- <sup>7</sup> There they are, bellowing with their mouths  
with swords | in their lips—\*  
for “Who,” they think, “will | hear us?”
- <sup>8</sup> But you, O LORD, | laugh at them;\*  
you hold all the nations in de- | rision.
- <sup>9</sup> O my Strength, I will | watch for you,\*  
for you, O God, are my | fortress.
- <sup>10</sup> My God in his steadfast love will | meet  
me;\*  
God will let me look  
in triumph on my | enemies.
- <sup>11</sup> Kill them not, lest my peo- | ple forget;\*  
make them totter by your power and  
bring them down, O | Lord, our shield!
- <sup>12</sup> For the sin of their mouths,  
the words of their lips,  
let them be trapped | in their pride.\*  
For the cursing and lies that they utter,  
<sup>13</sup> consume | them in wrath;  
consume them till they | are no more,\*  
that they may know that God rules over

Jacob to the ends | of the earth.

- <sup>14</sup> Each evening they come back,  
howling | like dogs\*  
and prowling about the | city.
- <sup>15</sup> They wander a- | bout for food\*  
and growl if they do not | get their fill.
- <sup>16</sup> But I will sing of your strength;  
I will sing aloud of your steadfast love  
in the | morning.\*  
For you have been to me a fortress and a  
refuge in the day of | my distress.
- <sup>17</sup> O my Strength, I will sing praises to you,  
for you, O God, are my | fortress,\*  
the God who shows me | steadfast love.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

60

- <sup>1</sup> O God, you have rejected us,  
broken our de- | fences;\*  
you have been angry; oh, re- | store us.
- <sup>2</sup> You have made the land to quake;  
you have torn it | open;\*  
repair its breaches, for it | totters.
- <sup>3</sup> You have made your people see | hard things;\*  
you have given us wine to drink that  
made us | stagger.
- <sup>4</sup> You have set up a banner for those  
who | fear you,\*  
that they may flee to it | from the bow.
- <sup>5</sup> That your beloved ones may be de- | livered,\*  
give salvation by your right hand  
and | answer us!
- <sup>6</sup> God has spoken in his | holiness:\*  
“With exultation I will divide up  
Shechem and portion  
out the Vale of | Succoth.
- <sup>7</sup> Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine;  
Ephraim is my | helmet,\*  
Judah is my | scepter.

- <sup>8</sup> Moab is my washbasin;  
upon Edom I | cast my shoe;\*  
over Philistia I shout in | triumph.”
- <sup>9</sup> Who will bring me to the fortified | city?\*
- Who will lead me to | Edom?
- <sup>10</sup> Have you not rejected us, | O God?\*
- You do not go forth, O God,  
with our | armies.
- <sup>11</sup> Oh, grant us help a- | gainst the foe,\*  
for vain is the salva- | tion of man!
- <sup>12</sup> With God we shall do | valiantly;\*  
it is he who will tread | down our foes.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 61

- <sup>1</sup> Hear my cry, | O God,\*  
listen | to my prayer;
- <sup>2</sup> from the end of the earth I call to you  
when my | heart is faint.\*  
Lead me to the rock  
that is high- | er than I,  
<sup>3</sup> for you have been my | refuge,\*  
a strong tower against the | enemy.
- <sup>4</sup> Let me dwell in your tent for- | ever!\*
- Let me take refuge under  
the shelter | of your wings!
- <sup>5</sup> For you, O God, have | heard my vows;\*  
you have given me the heritage  
of those who | fear your name.
- <sup>6</sup> Prolong the life | of the king;\*  
may his years endure to all gener- | ations!
- <sup>7</sup> May he be enthroned forever be- | fore God;\*  
appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to  
watch | over him!
- <sup>8</sup> So will I ever sing praises | to your name,\*  
as I perform my vows day | after day.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 62

- <sup>1</sup> For God alone my soul waits in | silence,\*  
from him comes my sal- | vation.
- <sup>2</sup> He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my | fortress;\*  
I shall not be greatly | shaken.
- <sup>3</sup> How long will all of you attack  
a man to | batter him,\*  
like a leaning wall, a | tottering fence?
- <sup>4</sup> They only plan to thrust him down  
from his high position.  
They take pleasure in | falsehood.\*  
They bless with their mouths,  
but inwardly | they curse.
- <sup>5</sup> For God alone, O my soul,  
wait in | silence,\*  
for my hope is | from him.
- <sup>6</sup> He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my | fortress;\*  
I shall not be | shaken.
- <sup>7</sup> On God rests my salvation and my | glory;\*  
my mighty rock, my refuge | is God.
- <sup>8</sup> Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart be- | fore him;\*  
God is a refuge | for us.
- <sup>9</sup> Those of low estate are but a breath; those  
of high estate are a de- | lusion;\*  
in the balances they go up; they are  
together lighter | than a breath.
- <sup>10</sup> Put no trust in extortion;  
set no vain hopes on | robbery;\*  
if riches increase,  
set not your | heart on them.
- <sup>11</sup> Once God has spoken;  
twice have I | heard this:\*  
that power belongs to God, <sup>12</sup> and that to  
you, O Lord, belongs | steadfast love.

For you will render | to a man\*  
according | to his work.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 63

- <sup>1</sup> O God, you are my God;  
earnestly I | seek you;\*  
my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints  
for you, as in a dry and weary land  
where there is no | water.
- <sup>2</sup> So I have looked upon you  
in the sanctu- | ary,\*  
beholding your power and | glory.
- <sup>3</sup> Because your steadfast love  
is bet- | ter than life,\*  
my lips will | praise you.
- <sup>4</sup> So I will bless you as long | as I live;\*  
in your name I will lift | up my hands.
- <sup>5</sup> My soul will be satisfied as  
with fat and | rich food,\*  
and my mouth will praise you  
with | joyful lips,
- <sup>6</sup> when I remember you up- | on my bed,\*  
and meditate on you  
in the watches | of the night;
- <sup>7</sup> for you have | been my help,\*  
and in the shadow of your wings  
I will | sing for joy.
- <sup>8</sup> My soul | clings to you;\*  
your right hand up- | holds me.
- <sup>9</sup> But those who seek to de- | stroy my life\*  
shall go down into the depths | of  
the earth;
- <sup>10</sup> they shall be given over to the  
power | of the sword;\*  
they shall be a portion for | jackals.
- <sup>11</sup> But the king shall re- | joice in God,\*  
all who swear by him shall exult,  
for the mouths of liars | will be stopped.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 64

- <sup>1</sup> Hear my voice, O God, in | my complaint;\*  
preserve my life from dread  
of the | enemy.
  - <sup>2</sup> Hide me from the secret plots  
of the | wicked,\*  
from the throng of evil- | doers,
  - <sup>3</sup> who whet their | tongues like swords,\*  
who aim bitter words like | arrows,
  - <sup>4</sup> shooting from ambush at the | blameless,\*  
shooting at him suddenly  
and with- | out fear.
  - <sup>5</sup> They hold fast to their evil | purpose;\*  
they talk of laying snares secretly,  
thinking, who can | see them?
  - <sup>6</sup> They search out injustice, saying, “We have  
accomplished a dil- | igent search.”\*  
For the inward mind and heart  
of a | man are deep!
  - <sup>7</sup> But God shoots his ar- | row at them;\*  
they are wounded | suddenly.
  - <sup>8</sup> They are brought to ruin, with their own  
tongues turned a- | gainst them;\*  
all who see them will | wag their heads.
  - <sup>9</sup> Then all | mankind fears;\*  
they tell what God has brought about  
and ponder what | he has done.
  - <sup>10</sup> Let the righteous one rejoice in the LORD  
and take refuge | in him!\*  
Let all the upright in | heart exult!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 65

- <sup>1</sup> Praise is due to you, O God, in | Zion,\*  
and to you shall vows | be performed.
- <sup>2</sup> O you who | hears prayer,\*  
to you shall | all flesh come.
- <sup>3</sup> When iniquities prevail a- | gainst me,\*  
you atone for our trans- | gressions.
- <sup>4</sup> Blessèd is the one you choose and  
bring near, to dwell | in your courts!\*
- We shall be satisfied with the goodness  
of your house, the holiness  
of your | temple!
- <sup>5</sup> By awesome deeds you answer us with  
righteousness, O God of our sal- | vation,\*  
the hope of all the ends of the earth  
and of the | farthest seas;
- <sup>6</sup> the one who by his strength established  
the | mountains,\*  
being girded | with might;
- <sup>7</sup> who stills the roaring of the seas,  
the roaring | of their waves,\*  
the tumult of the | peoples,
- <sup>8</sup> so that those who dwell at the ends  
of the earth are in awe | at your signs.\*  
You make the going out of the morning  
and the evening to | shout for joy.
- <sup>9</sup> You visit the earth and water it; you greatly  
enrich it; the river of God is full of | water;\*  
you provide their grain,  
for so you have pre- | pared it.
- <sup>10</sup> You water its furrows abundantly,  
settling its | ridges,\*  
softening it with showers,  
and bless- | ing its growth.
- <sup>11</sup> You crown the year with your | bounty;\*  
your wagon tracks overflow  
with a- | bundance.
- <sup>12</sup> The pastures of the wilderness | overflow,\*  
the hills gird them- | selves with joy,
- <sup>13</sup> the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,  
the valleys deck them- | selves with grain,\*  
they shout and sing together | for joy.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 66

- <sup>1</sup> Shout for joy to God, | all the earth;\*  
<sup>2</sup> sing the glory of his name;  
give to him | glorious praise!
- <sup>3</sup> Say to God, “How awesome | are  
your deeds!\*
- So great is your power that your  
enemies come cringing | to you.
- <sup>4</sup> All the earth worships you and  
sings prais- | es to you;\*
- they sing praises | to your name.”
- <sup>5</sup> Come and see what | God has done:\*
- he is awesome in his deeds toward  
the chil- | dren of man.
- <sup>6</sup> He turned the sea into | dry land;\*
- they passed through the riv- | er on foot.  
There did we rejoice in him,<sup>7</sup> who rules  
by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch  
on the | nations—\*
- let not the rebellious ex- | alt themselves.
- <sup>8</sup> Bless our God, O | peoples,\*  
let the sound of his | praise be heard,
- <sup>9</sup> who has kept our soul among the | living\*  
and has not let our | feet slip.
- <sup>10</sup> For you, O God, have | tested us;\*
- you have tried us as sil- | ver is tried.
- <sup>11</sup> You brought us in- | to the net;\*
- you laid a crushing burden | on  
our backs;
- <sup>12</sup> you let men ride o- | ver our heads;\*
- we went through fire and through water;  
yet you have brought us out to a place  
of a- | bundance.
- <sup>13</sup> I will come into your house  
with burnt | offerings;\*
- I will perform my | vows to you,

- <sup>14</sup> that which my lips | uttered\*  
and my mouth promised  
when I was in | trouble.
- <sup>15</sup> I will offer to you burnt offerings  
of fattened animals, with the smoke  
of the sacri- | fice of rams;\*  
I will make an offering  
of | bulls and goats.
- <sup>16</sup> Come and hear, all you who | fear God,\*  
and I will tell what he  
has done | for my soul.
- <sup>17</sup> I cried to him | with my mouth,\*  
and high praise was | on my tongue.
- <sup>18</sup> If I had cherished iniquity | in my heart,\*  
the Lord would not have | listened.
- <sup>19</sup> But truly God has | listened;\*  
he has attended to the voice | of my  
prayer.
- <sup>20</sup> Blessèd | be God,\*  
because he has not rejected my prayer or  
removed his steadfast | love from me!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 67

- <sup>1</sup> May God be gracious to us and | bless us\*  
and make his face to shine up- | on us,
- <sup>2</sup> that your way may be | known on earth,\*  
your saving power among all | nations.
- <sup>3</sup> Let the peoples praise you, | O God;\*  
let all the peoples | praise you!
- <sup>4</sup> Let the nations be glad and | sing for joy,\*  
for you judge the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations up- | on earth.
- <sup>5</sup> Let the peoples praise you, | O God;\*  
let all the peoples | praise you!
- <sup>6</sup> The earth has yielded its | increase;\*  
God, our God, shall | bless us.

- <sup>7</sup> God shall | bless us;\*  
let all the ends of the earth | fear him!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 68

- <sup>1</sup> God shall arise, his enemies shall  
be | scattered;\*  
and those who hate him shall flee  
be- | fore him!
- <sup>2</sup> As smoke is driven away,  
so you shall drive | them away;\*  
as wax melts before fire, so the  
wicked shall perish be- | fore God!
- <sup>3</sup> But the righteous shall be glad;  
they shall exult be- | fore God;\*  
they shall be jubilant | with joy!
- <sup>4</sup> Sing to God, sing praises | to his name;\*  
lift up a song to him who rides through  
the deserts; his name is the LORD;  
exult be- | fore him!
- <sup>5</sup> Father of the fatherless and  
protector of | widows\*  
is God in his holy habi- | tation.
- <sup>6</sup> God settles the solitary in a home;  
he leads out the prisoners to pros- | perity,\*  
but the rebellious dwell  
in a | parched land.
- <sup>7</sup> O God, when you went out  
before your | people,\*  
when you marched through  
the | wilderness,
- <sup>8</sup> the earth quaked, the heavens poured down  
rain, before God, the One of | Sinai,\*  
before God, the God of | Israel.
- <sup>9</sup> Rain in abundance, O God,  
you | shed abroad;\*  
you restored your inheritance  
as it | languished;

- 10 your flock found a dwell- | ing in it;\*  
in your goodness, O God, you provided  
for the | needy.
- 11 The Lord | gives the word;\*  
the women who announce  
the news are a | great host:
- 12 “The kings of the armies  
—they | flee, they flee!”\*  
The women at home divide the | spoil—
- 13 though you men lie among  
the | sheepfolds—\*  
the wings of a dove covered with silver,  
its pinions with | shimmering gold.
- 14 When the Almighty scatters | kings there,\*  
let snow fall on | Zalmon.
- 15 O mountain of God, mountain of | Bashan;\*  
O many-peaked mountain,  
mountain of | Bashan!
- 16 Why do you look with hatred,  
O many-peaked | mountain,\*  
at the mount that God desired  
for his abode, yes, where the LORD  
will dwell for- | ever?
- 17 The chariots of God are twice ten  
thousand, thousands upon | thousands;\*  
the Lord is among them; Sinai is now  
in the sanctu- | ary.
- 18 You ascended on high, leading a host  
of captives in your train and receiving  
gifts a- | mong men,\*  
even among the rebellious,  
that the LORD God may | dwell there.
- 19 Blessèd be the Lord, who daily | bears us up;\*  
God is our sal- | vation.
- 20 Our God is a God of sal- | vation,\*  
and to God, the Lord, belong  
deliverances | from death.
- 21 But God will strike the heads  
of his | enemies,\*  
the hairy crown of him who walks  
in his | guilty ways.
- 22 The Lord said, “I will bring them back  
from | Bashan,\*  
I will bring them back from  
the depths | of the sea,  
23 that you may strike your feet | in  
their blood,\*  
that the tongues of your dogs  
may have their portion | from the foe.”
- 24 Your procession is seen, | O God,\*  
the procession of my God,  
my King, into the sanctu- | ary—
- 25 the singers in front, the mu- | sicians last,\*  
between them virgins  
playing | tambourines:
- 26 “Bless God in the great congre- | gation,\*  
the LORD, O you who are  
of Israel’s | fountain!”
- 27 There is Benjamin, the least of them,  
in the lead, the princes  
of Judah | in their thron,\*  
the princes of Zebulun,  
the princes of | Naphtali.
- 28 Summon your power, | O God,\*  
the power, O God,  
by which you have | worked for us.
- 29 Because of your temple at Je- | rusalem\*  
kings shall bear | gifts to you.
- 30 Rebuke the beasts that dwell among  
the reeds, the herd of bulls  
with the calves of the | peoples.\*  
Trample underfoot those who lust  
after tribute; scatter the peoples  
who de- | light in war.
- 31 Nobles shall come from | Egypt;\*  
Cush shall hasten to stretch out  
her | hands to God.
- 32 O kingdoms of the earth, | sing to God;\*  
sing praises | to the Lord,  
33 to him who rides in the heavens,  
the ancient | heavens;\*  
behold, he sends out his voice,  
his | mighty voice.

<sup>34</sup> Ascribe | power to God,\*  
whose majesty is over Israel, and whose  
power is | in the skies.

<sup>35</sup> Awesome is God from his sanctu- | ary;\*  
the God of Israel—he is the one who  
gives power and strength to his people.  
Blessèd | be God!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 69

<sup>1</sup> Save me, | O God!\*  
For the waters have come up | to my neck.

<sup>2</sup> I sink in deep mire,  
where there is no | foothold;\*  
I have come into deep waters,  
and the flood sweeps | over me.

<sup>3</sup> I am weary with my crying out;  
my | throat is parched.\*  
My eyes grow dim with  
waiting | for my God.

<sup>4</sup> More in number than the hairs | of my head\*  
are those who hate me with- | out cause;  
mighty are those who would destroy me,  
those who attack | me with lies.\*  
What I did not steal must I | now restore?

<sup>5</sup> O God, you know my | folly;\*  
the wrongs I have done are  
not hid- | den from you.

<sup>6</sup> Let not those who hope in you be put to  
shame through me, O Lord | GOD of hosts;\*  
let not those who seek you be brought to  
dishonor through me, O God of | Israel.

<sup>7</sup> For it is for your sake that  
I have | borne reproach,\*  
that dishonor has covered | my face.

<sup>8</sup> I have become a stranger to my | brothers,\*  
an alien to my | mother's sons.

<sup>9</sup> For zeal for your house has con- | sumed me,\*  
and the reproaches of those who  
reproach you have fall- | en on me.

<sup>10</sup> When I wept and humbled  
my soul with | fasting,\*  
it became | my reproach.

<sup>11</sup> When I made sackcloth my | clothing,\*  
I became a byword | to them.

<sup>12</sup> I am the talk of those who sit | in the gate,\*  
and the drunkards make  
songs a- | bout me.

<sup>13</sup> But as for me, my prayer  
is to you, | O LORD.\*  
At an acceptable time, O God,  
in the abundance of your steadfast love  
answer me in your saving | faithfulness.

<sup>14</sup> Deliver me from sinking | in the mire;\*  
let me be delivered from my enemies  
and from the deep | waters.

<sup>15</sup> Let not the flood sweep over me,  
or the deep swal- | low me up,\*  
or the pit close its mouth | over me.

<sup>16</sup> Answer me, O LORD,  
for your steadfast | love is good;\*  
according to your abundant  
mercy, | turn to me.

<sup>17</sup> Hide not your face from your servant;  
for I am | in distress;\*  
make haste to | answer me.

<sup>18</sup> Draw near to my soul, re- | deem me;\*  
ransom me because of my | enemies!

<sup>19</sup> You know my reproach, and my shame and  
my dis- | honor;\*  
my foes are all | known to you.

<sup>20</sup> Reproaches have broken my heart,  
so that I am | in despair.\*  
I looked for pity, but there was none,  
and for comforters, but I | found none.

<sup>21</sup> They gave me poi- | son for food,\*  
and for my thirst they gave me  
sour | wine to drink.

- <sup>22</sup> Let their own table before them  
be- | come a snare;\*  
and when they are at peace,  
let it be- | come a trap.
- <sup>23</sup> Let their eyes be darkened,  
so that they | cannot see,\*  
and make their loins tremble  
con- | tinually.
- <sup>24</sup> Pour out your indignation up- | on them,\*  
and let your burning anger  
over- | take them.
- <sup>25</sup> May their camp be a deso- | lation;\*  
let no one dwell | in their tents.
- <sup>26</sup> For they persecute him whom  
you have | struck down,\*  
and they recount the pain of those you  
have | wounded.
- <sup>27</sup> Add to them punishment  
upon | punishment;\*  
may they have no acquittal | from you.
- <sup>28</sup> Let them be blotted out of the book  
of the | living;\*  
let them not be enrolled among  
the | righteous.
- <sup>29</sup> But I am afflicted | and in pain;\*  
let your salvation, O God, set | me on high!
- <sup>30</sup> I will praise the name of God | with a song;\*  
I will magnify him with thanks- | giving.
- <sup>31</sup> This will please the LORD more | than an ox\*  
or a bull with | horns and hoofs.
- <sup>32</sup> When the humble see it they | will be glad;\*  
you who seek God, let your | hearts revive.
- <sup>33</sup> For the LORD hears the | needy\*  
and does not despise his own people  
who are | prisoners.
- <sup>34</sup> Let heaven and earth | praise him,\*  
the seas and everything that | moves  
in them.
- <sup>35</sup> For God will save Zion and build up  
the cities of | Judah,\*  
and people shall dwell there  
and pos- | sess it;

- <sup>36</sup> the offspring of his servants shall  
in- | herit it,\*  
and those who love his name  
shall | dwell in it.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 70

- <sup>1</sup> Make haste, O God, to de- | liver me!\*  
O LORD, make haste to | help me!
- <sup>2</sup> Let them be put to shame and confusion  
who | seek my life!\*  
Let them be turned back and brought to  
dishonor who de- | sire my hurt!
- <sup>3</sup> Let them turn back because | of their shame\*  
who say, “A- | ha, Aha!”
- <sup>4</sup> May all who seek you rejoice  
and be | glad in you!\*  
May those who love your salvation  
say evermore, | “God is great!”
- <sup>5</sup> But I am poor and needy;  
hasten to me, | O God!\*  
You are my help and my deliverer;  
O LORD, do | not delay!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 71

- <sup>1</sup> In you, O LORD, do I take | refuge;\*  
let me never be | put to shame!
- <sup>2</sup> In your righteousness deliver me  
and | rescue me;\*  
incline your ear to me, and | save me!
- <sup>3</sup> Be to me a rock of refuge,  
to which I may contin- | ually come;\*  
you have given the command to save me,  
for you are my rock and my | fortress.

<sup>4</sup> Rescue me, O my God,  
 from the hand of the | wicked,\*  
 from the grasp of the unjust  
 and | cruel man.

<sup>5</sup> For you, O Lord, | are my hope,\*  
 my trust, O LORD, | from my youth.

<sup>6</sup> Upon you I have leaned from before  
 my birth; you are he who took me  
 from my | mother's womb.\*  
 My praise is continually | of you.

<sup>7</sup> I have been as a portent to | many,\*  
 but you are my strong | refuge.

<sup>8</sup> My mouth is filled | with your praise,\*  
 and with your glory | all the day.

<sup>9</sup> Do not cast me off in the time of | old age;\*  
 forsake me not when my | strength  
 is spent.

<sup>10</sup> For my enemies speak con- | cerning me;\*  
 those who watch for my life  
 consult together <sup>11</sup> and say,  
 "God has for- | saken him;  
 pursue and | seize him,\*  
 for there is none to de- | liver him."

<sup>12</sup> O God, be not | far from me,\*  
 O my God, make haste to | help me!

<sup>13</sup> May my accusers be put to shame | and  
 consumed,\*  
 with scorn and disgrace may they  
 be covered who | seek my hurt.

<sup>14</sup> But I will hope con- | tinually\*  
 and will praise you yet | more and more.

<sup>15</sup> My mouth will tell of your righteous acts,  
 of your deeds of salvation | all the day,\*  
 for their number is past my | knowledge.

<sup>16</sup> With the mighty deeds of the Lord  
 GOD | I will come;\*  
 I will remind them of your  
 righteousness, | yours alone.

<sup>17</sup> O God, from my youth you have | taught  
 me,\*  
 and I still proclaim your | wondrous  
 deeds.

<sup>18</sup> So even to old age and gray hairs,  
 O God, do not for- | sake me,\*  
 until I proclaim your might  
 to another generation, your power  
 to all | those to come.

<sup>19</sup> Your righteousness, O God,  
 reaches the high | heavens.\*  
 You who have done great things,  
 O God, who is | like you?

<sup>20</sup> You who have made me see many troubles  
 and calamities will revive | me again;\*  
 from the depths of the earth you  
 will bring me | up again.

<sup>21</sup> You will increase my | greatness\*  
 and comfort | me again.

<sup>22</sup> I will also praise you with the harp  
 for your faithfulness, | O my God;\*  
 I will sing praises to you with the lyre,  
 O Holy One of | Israel.

<sup>23</sup> My lips will shout for joy,  
 when I sing prais- | es to you;\*  
 my soul also, which you | have redeemed.

<sup>24</sup> And my tongue will talk of your righteous  
 help all | the day long,\*  
 for they have been put to shame and  
 disappointed who sought to | do me hurt.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

72

<sup>1</sup> Give the king your justice, | O God,\*  
 and your righteousness to the | royal son!

<sup>2</sup> May he judge your people  
 with | righteousness,\*  
 and your poor with | justice!

<sup>3</sup> Let the mountains bear prosperity  
 for the | people,\*  
 and the hills, in | righteousness!

- <sup>4</sup> May he defend the cause of the poor  
of the people, give deliverance to the  
children of the | needy,\*  
and crush the op- | pressor!
- <sup>5</sup> May they fear you while the | sun endures,\*  
and as long as the moon,  
throughout all gener- | ations!
- <sup>6</sup> May he be like rain that falls  
on the | mown grass,\*  
like showers that wa- | ter the earth!
- <sup>7</sup> In his days may the righteous | flourish,\*  
and peace abound,  
till the moon | be no more!
- <sup>8</sup> May he have dominion from | sea to sea,\*  
and from the River to the  
ends | of the earth!
- <sup>9</sup> May desert tribes bow down be- | fore him\*  
and his enemies | lick the dust!
- <sup>10</sup> May the kings of Tarshish and  
of the coastlands render him | tribute,\*  
may the kings of Sheba and  
Seba | bring gifts!
- <sup>11</sup> May all kings fall down be- | fore him,\*  
all nations | serve him!
- <sup>12</sup> For he delivers the needy | when he calls,\*  
the poor and him who has no | helper.
- <sup>13</sup> He has pity on the weak and the | needy,\*  
and saves the lives of the | needy.
- <sup>14</sup> From oppression and violence  
he re- | deems their life,\*  
and precious is their blood | in his sight.
- <sup>15</sup> Long may he live; may gold of Sheba  
be giv- | en to him!\*
- May prayer be made for him continually,  
and blessings invoked for him | all the day!
- <sup>16</sup> May there be abundance of grain in the  
land; on the tops of the mountains may it  
wave; may its fruit be like | Lebanon,\*  
and may people blossom in the cities  
like the grass | of the field!

- <sup>17</sup> May his name endure forever, his fame  
continue as long | as the sun!\*
- May people be blessed in him,  
all nations call him | blessed!
- <sup>18</sup> Blessed be the LORD, the God of | Israel,\*  
who alone does | wondrous things.
- <sup>19</sup> Blessed be his glorious name for- | ever;\*  
may the whole earth be filled  
with his glory! Amen and | Amen!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 73

- <sup>1</sup> Truly God is good to | Israel,\*  
to those who are | pure in heart.
- <sup>2</sup> But as for me, my feet had  
almost | stumbled,\*  
my steps had | nearly slipped.
- <sup>3</sup> For I was envious of the | arrogant\*  
when I saw the prosperity  
of the | wicked.
- <sup>4</sup> For they have no pangs | until death,\*  
their bodies are | fat and sleek.
- <sup>5</sup> They are not in trouble as | others are,\*  
they are not stricken like the rest  
of | mankind.
- <sup>6</sup> Therefore pride is their | necklace,\*  
violence covers them as a | garment.
- <sup>7</sup> Their eyes swell out through | fatness,\*  
their hearts overflow with | follies.
- <sup>8</sup> They scoff and speak with | malice,\*  
loftily they threaten op- | pression.
- <sup>9</sup> They set their mouths against  
the | heavens,\*  
and their tongue struts | through  
the earth.
- <sup>10</sup> Therefore his people turn | back to them,\*  
and find no | fault in them.

- <sup>11</sup> And they say, “How can | God know?\*”  
Is there knowledge in the | Most High?”
- <sup>12</sup> Behold, these are the | wicked;\*”  
always at ease, they increase in | riches.
- <sup>13</sup> All in vain have I kept my | heart clean\*  
and washed my hands in | innocence.
- <sup>14</sup> For all the day long I have been | stricken\*  
and rebuked every | morning.
- <sup>15</sup> If I had said, “I will | speak thus,”\*  
I would have betrayed the generation  
of your | children.
- <sup>16</sup> But when I thought how to  
under- | stand this,\*  
it seemed to me a | wearisome task,
- <sup>17</sup> until I went into the sanctuary | of God;\*”  
then I dis- | cerned their end.
- <sup>18</sup> Truly you set them in slippery | places;\*”  
you make them fall to | ruin.
- <sup>19</sup> How they are destroyed in a | moment,\*  
swept away utterly by | terrors!
- <sup>20</sup> Like a dream when | one awakes,\*  
O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you  
despise them as | phantoms.
- <sup>21</sup> When my soul was em- | bittered,\*  
when I was | pricked in heart,
- <sup>22</sup> I was brutish and | ignorant;\*”  
I was like a | beast toward you.
- <sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, I am continually | with you;\*”  
you hold my | right hand.
- <sup>24</sup> You guide me with your | counsel,\*  
and afterward you will receive  
me to | glory.
- <sup>25</sup> Whom have I in | heaven but you?\*”  
And there is nothing on earth that  
I desire be- | sides you.
- <sup>26</sup> My flesh and my | heart may fail,\*  
but God is the strength of my heart  
and my portion for- | ever.
- <sup>27</sup> For behold, those who are far  
from you shall | perish;\*”

you put an end to everyone who is  
unfaithful | to you.

- <sup>28</sup> But for me it is good to be | near God;\*”  
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,  
that I may tell of | all your works.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

74

- <sup>1</sup> O God, why do you cast us off for- | ever?\*”  
Why does your anger smoke against  
the sheep of your | pasture?
- <sup>2</sup> Remember your congregation, which you  
have purchased of old, which you have  
redeemed to be the tribe of your | heritage!\*”  
Remember Mount Zion,  
where | you have dwelt.
- <sup>3</sup> Direct your steps to the perpetual | ruins;\*”  
the enemy has destroyed everything  
in the sanctu- | ary!
- <sup>4</sup> Your foes have roared in the midst  
of your | meeting place;\*”  
they set up their own | signs for signs.
- <sup>5</sup> They were like those who swing | axes\*  
in a for- | est of trees.
- <sup>6</sup> And all its | carved wood\*  
they broke down with hatchets  
and | hammers.
- <sup>7</sup> They set your sanctuary | on fire;\*”  
they profaned the dwelling place of your  
name, bringing it down | to the ground.
- <sup>8</sup> They said to themselves,  
“We will utterly sub- | due them”;\*  
they burned all the meeting places  
of God | in the land.
- <sup>9</sup> We do not | see our signs;\*”  
there is no longer any prophet, and there  
is none among us who | knows how long.

- <sup>10</sup> How long, O God, is the | foe to scoff?\*
- Is the enemy to revile  
your name for- | ever?
- <sup>11</sup> Why do you hold back your hand,  
your | right hand?\*
- Take it from the fold of your garment  
and de- | stroy them!
- <sup>12</sup> Yet God my King is | from of old,\*  
working salvation in the midst | of  
the earth.
- <sup>13</sup> You divided the sea | by your might;\*
- you broke the heads of the sea monsters  
on the | waters.
- <sup>14</sup> You crushed the heads of Le- | viathan;\*
- you gave him as food for the creatures  
of the | wilderness.
- <sup>15</sup> You split open | springs and brooks;\*
- you dried up ever- | flowing streams.
- <sup>16</sup> Yours is the day, yours al- | so the night;\*
- you have established the heavenly  
lights | and the sun.
- <sup>17</sup> You have fixed all the boundaries | of  
the earth;\*
- you have made summer and | winter.
- <sup>18</sup> Remember this, O LORD,  
how the en- | emy scoffs,\*  
and a foolish people re- | viles  
your name.
- <sup>19</sup> Do not deliver the soul of your dove to  
the | wild beasts;\*
- do not forget the life of your poor  
for- | ever.
- <sup>20</sup> Have regard for the | covenant,\*  
for the dark places of the land are full  
of the habitations of | violence.
- <sup>21</sup> Let not the downtrodden turn | back  
in shame;\*
- let the poor and needy | praise  
your name.
- <sup>22</sup> Arise, O God, de- | fend your cause;\*
- remember how the foolish scoff  
at you | all the day!

- <sup>23</sup> Do not forget the clamor | of your foes,\*  
the uproar of those who rise against you,  
which goes up con- | tinually!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 75

- <sup>1</sup> We give thanks to you, O God; we give  
thanks, for your | name is near.\*  
We recount your | wondrous deeds.
- <sup>2</sup> “At the set time that | I appoint\*  
I will judge with | equity.
- <sup>3</sup> When the earth totters,  
and all its in- | habitants,\*  
it is I who keep steady its | pillars.
- <sup>4</sup> I say to the boastful, | ‘Do not boast,’\*  
and to the wicked, ‘Do not lift | up  
your horn;
- <sup>5</sup> do not lift up your | horn on high,\*  
or speak with | haughty neck.’ ”
- <sup>6</sup> For not from the east or | from the west\*  
and not from the wilderness  
comes | lifting up,
- <sup>7</sup> but it is God who executes | judgment,\*  
putting down one and lifting up  
an- | other.
- <sup>8</sup> For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup  
with foaming wine, well mixed,  
and he pours | out from it,\*  
and all the wicked of the earth shall  
drain it down | to the dregs.
- <sup>9</sup> But I will declare it for- | ever;\*
- I will sing praises to the God of | Jacob.
- <sup>10</sup> All the horns of the wicked I will | cut off,\*  
but the horns of the righteous  
shall be | lifted up.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

76

- <sup>1</sup> In Judah | God is known;\*  
his name is great in | Israēl.
- <sup>2</sup> His abode has been established in | Salem,\*  
his dwelling place in | Zion.
- <sup>3</sup> There he broke the flashing | arrows,\*  
the shield, the sword,  
and the weap- | ons of war.
- <sup>4</sup> Glorious are you, more ma- | jestic\*  
than the moun- | tains of prey.
- <sup>5</sup> The stouthearted were stripped of their  
spoil; they sank | into sleep;\*  
all the men of war were unable  
to | use their hands.
- <sup>6</sup> At your rebuke, O God of | Jacob,\*  
both rider and | horse lay stunned.
- <sup>7</sup> But you, you are | to be feared!\*  
Who can stand before you when once  
your an- | ger is roused?
- <sup>8</sup> From the heavens you uttered | judgment;\*  
the earth feared | and was still,
- <sup>9</sup> when God arose to establish | judgment,\*  
to save all the humble | of the earth.
- <sup>10</sup> Surely the wrath of man shall | praise you;\*  
the remnant of wrath you will  
put on | like a belt.
- <sup>11</sup> Make your vows to the LORD your God  
and per- | form them;\*  
let all around him bring gifts to him  
who is | to be feared,
- <sup>12</sup> who cuts off the spirit of | princes,\*  
who is to be feared by the kings | of  
the earth.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

77

- <sup>1</sup> I cry a- | loud to God,\*  
aloud to God, and he will | hear me.
- <sup>2</sup> In the day of my trouble I | seek the Lord;\*  
in the night my hand is stretched out  
without wearying; my soul refuses  
to be | comforted.
- <sup>3</sup> When I remember | God, I moan;\*  
when I meditate, my | spirit faints.
- <sup>4</sup> You hold my eyelids | open;\*  
I am so troubled that I | cannot speak.
- <sup>5</sup> I consider the | days of old,\*  
the years | long ago.
- <sup>6</sup> I said, "Let me remember my song in the  
night; let me meditate | in my heart."\*  
Then my spirit made a dil- | igent search:
- <sup>7</sup> "Will the Lord spurn for- | ever,\*  
and never again be | favorable?"
- <sup>8</sup> Has his steadfast love for- | ever ceased?\*
- Are his promises at an end | for all time?
- <sup>9</sup> Has God forgotten to be | gracious?\*
- Has he in anger shut up his com- | passion?\*
- <sup>10</sup> Then I said, "I will ap- | peal to this,\*  
to the years of the right hand  
of the | Most High."
- <sup>11</sup> I will remember the deeds | of the LORD;\*  
yes, I will remember your won- | ders of old.
- <sup>12</sup> I will ponder | all your work,\*  
and meditate on your | mighty deeds.
- <sup>13</sup> Your way, O God, is | holy.\*  
What god is great | like our God?
- <sup>14</sup> You are the God who works | wonders;\*  
you have made known your might  
among the | peoples.
- <sup>15</sup> You with your arm redeemed your | people,\*  
the children of Jacob and | Joseph.
- <sup>16</sup> When the waters saw you, O God, when  
the waters saw you, they | were afraid;\*  
indeed, the deep | trembled.

<sup>17</sup> The clouds poured out water;  
 the skies gave forth | thunder;\*  
 your arrows flashed on | every side.

<sup>18</sup> The crash of your thunder was in the  
 whirlwind; your lightnings lighted | up  
 the world;\*  
 the earth trem- | bled and shook.

<sup>19</sup> Your way was through the sea,  
 your path through the great | waters;\*  
 yet your footprints | were unseen.

<sup>20</sup> You led your people | like a flock\*  
 by the hand of Moses and | Aaron.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 78

<sup>1</sup> Give ear, O my people, to my | teaching;\*  
 incline your ears to the words | of  
 my mouth!

<sup>2</sup> I will open my mouth in a | parable;\*  
 I will utter dark sayings | from of old,  
<sup>3</sup> things that we have | heard and known,\*  
 that our fathers have | told us.

<sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children,  
 but tell to the coming generation the  
 glorious deeds of the LORD, | and his might,\*  
 and the wonders that | he has done.

<sup>5</sup> He established a testimony in Jacob and  
 appointed a law in | Israel,\*  
 which he commanded our fathers  
 to teach to their | children,  
<sup>6</sup> that the next generation might know them,  
 the children | yet unborn,\*  
 and arise and tell them to their | children,  
<sup>7</sup> so that they should set their | hope in God\*  
 and not forget the works of God,  
 but keep his com- | mandments;

<sup>8</sup> and that they should not be like  
 their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious  
 gener- | ation,\*  
 a generation whose heart was  
 not steadfast, whose spirit was  
 not faith- | ful to God.

<sup>9</sup> The Ephraimites, armed | with the bow,\*  
 turned back on the day of | battle.

<sup>10</sup> They did not keep God's | covenant,\*  
 but refused to walk according | to his law.

<sup>11</sup> They for- | got his works\*  
 and the wonders that he had | shown them.

<sup>12</sup> In the sight of their fathers  
 he performed | wonders\*  
 in the land of Egypt,  
 in the | fields of Zoan.

<sup>13</sup> He divided the sea and  
 let them | pass through it,\*  
 and made the waters stand | like a heap.

<sup>14</sup> In the daytime he led them | with a cloud,\*  
 and all the night with a | fiery light.

<sup>15</sup> He split rocks in the | wilderness\*  
 and gave them drink abundantly  
 as | from the deep.

<sup>16</sup> He made streams come out | of the rock\*  
 and caused waters to flow down  
 like | rivers.

<sup>17</sup> Yet they sinned still more a- | gainst him,\*  
 rebelling against the Most High  
 in the | desert.

<sup>18</sup> They tested God | in their heart\*  
 by demanding the | food they craved.

<sup>19</sup> They spoke against God, | saying,\*  
 "Can God spread a table  
 in the | wilderness?"

<sup>20</sup> He struck the rock so that water gushed  
 out and streams | overflowed.\*  
 Can he also give bread or  
 provide meat for his | people?"

21 Therefore, when the LORD heard,  
 he was full of wrath; a fire was kindled  
 against | Jacob;\*  
 his anger rose against | Israel,  
 22 because they did not be- | lieve in God\*  
 and did not trust his | saving power.  
 23 Yet he commanded the | skies above\*  
 and opened the doors of | heaven,  
 24 and he rained down on them  
 man- | na to eat\*  
 and gave them the grain of | heaven.  
 25 Man ate of the bread of the | angels;\*  
 he sent them food in a- | bundance.  
 26 He caused the east wind to blow  
 in the | heavens;\*  
 and by his power he led out  
 the | south wind;  
 27 he rained meat on | them like dust,\*  
 winged birds like the sand | of the seas;  
 28 he let them fall in the midst | of their camp,\*  
 all around their | dwellings.  
 29 And they ate and were | well filled,\*  
 for he gave them | what they craved.  
 30 But before they had satisfied their | craving,\*  
 while the food was still | in their mouths,  
 31 the anger of God rose against them, and he  
 killed the strong- | est of them\*  
 and laid low the young men of | Israel.  
 32 In spite of all this, | they still sinned;\*  
 despite his wonders, they did | not  
 believe.  
 33 So he made their days  
 vanish | like a breath,\*  
 and their years in | terror.  
 34 When he killed them, they | sought him;\*  
 they repented and sought  
 God | earnestly.  
 35 They remembered that God | was  
 their rock,\*  
 the Most High God their re- | deemer.

36 But they flattered him | with their mouths;\*  
 they lied to him | with their tongues.  
 37 Their heart was not steadfast | toward him;\*  
 they were not faithful to his | covenant.  
 38 Yet he, being compassionate, atoned for  
 their iniquity and did not de- | stroy them;\*  
 he restrained his anger often  
 and did not stir up | all his wrath.  
 39 He remembered that they | were but flesh,\*  
 a wind that passes and comes | not again.  
 40 How often they rebelled against him  
 in the | wilderness\*  
 and grieved him in the | desert!  
 41 They tested God again | and again\*  
 and provoked the Holy One of | Israel.  
 42 They did not remem- | ber his power\*  
 or the day when he redeemed  
 them | from the foe,  
 43 when he performed his signs in | Egypt\*  
 and his marvels in the | fields of Zoan.  
 44 He turned their riv- | ers to blood,\*  
 so that they could not drink | of  
 their streams.  
 45 He sent among them swarms of flies,  
 which de- | voured them,\*  
 and frogs, which de- | stroyed them.  
 46 He gave their crops  
 to the destroying | locust\*  
 and the fruit of their labor to the | locust.  
 47 He destroyed their | vines with hail\*  
 and their syca- | mores with frost.  
 48 He gave over their cattle | to the hail\*  
 and their flocks to | thunderbolts.  
 49 He let loose on them his burning anger,  
 wrath, indignation, | and distress,\*  
 a company of destroying | angels.  
 50 He made a path for his | anger,\*  
 he did not spare them from death,  
 but gave their lives over | to the plague.  
 51 He struck down every firstborn in | Egypt,\*  
 the firstfruits of their strength

- in the | tents of Ham.
- <sup>52</sup> Then he led out his people | like sheep\*  
and guided them in the wilderness | like  
a flock.
- <sup>53</sup> He led them in safety,  
so that they were | not afraid,\*  
but the sea overwhelmed their | enemies.
- <sup>54</sup> And he brought them to his | holy land,\*  
to the mountain which his right | hand  
had won.
- <sup>55</sup> He drove out nations be- | fore them;\*  
he apportioned them for a possession  
and settled the tribes of Israel | in  
their tents.
- <sup>56</sup> Yet they tested and rebelled  
against the | Most High God\*  
and did not keep his testi- | monies,  
<sup>57</sup> but turned away and acted treacherously  
like their | fathers;\*  
they twisted like a de- | ceitful bow.
- <sup>58</sup> For they provoked him to anger  
with their high | places;\*  
they moved him to jealousy  
with their | idols.
- <sup>59</sup> When God heard, he was | full of wrath,\*  
and he utterly rejected | Israel.
- <sup>60</sup> He forsook his dwelling at | Shiloh,\*  
the tent where he dwelt a- | mong  
mankind,
- <sup>61</sup> and delivered his power to cap- | tivity,\*  
his glory to the hand | of the foe.
- <sup>62</sup> He gave his people over | to the sword\*  
and vented his wrath on his | heritage.
- <sup>63</sup> Fire devoured their | young men,\*  
and their young women  
had no | marriage song.
- <sup>64</sup> Their priests fell | by the sword,\*  
and their widows made no lamen- | tation.
- <sup>65</sup> Then the Lord awoke | as from sleep,\*  
like a strong man shouting be- | cause  
of wine.

- <sup>66</sup> And he put his adversaries | to rout;\*  
he put them to ever- | lasting shame.
- <sup>67</sup> He rejected the tent of | Joseph;\*  
he did not choose the tribe of | Ephraim,  
<sup>68</sup> but he chose the tribe of | Judah,\*  
Mount Zion, | which he loves.
- <sup>69</sup> He built his sanctuary like  
the high | heavens,\*  
like the earth, which he has founded  
for- | ever.
- <sup>70</sup> He chose David his servant and took him  
from the | sheepfolds;\*  
<sup>71</sup> from following the nursing ewes he  
brought him to shepherd Jacob his  
people, Israel his in- | heritance.
- <sup>72</sup> With upright heart he shep- | herded them\*  
and guided them with his | skillful hand.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 79

- <sup>1</sup> O God, the nations have come into  
your inheritance; they have defiled  
your holy | temple;\*  
they have laid Jerusalem in | ruins.
- <sup>2</sup> They have given the bodies of your servants  
to the birds of the heav- | ens for food,\*  
the flesh of your faithful to the beasts | of  
the earth.
- <sup>3</sup> They have poured out their blood like water  
all around Je- | rusalem,\*  
and there was no one to | bury them.
- <sup>4</sup> We have become a taunt to our | neighbors,\*  
mocked and derided by those  
a- | round us.
- <sup>5</sup> How long, O LORD?  
Will you be angry for- | ever?\*
- Will your jealousy | burn like fire?

<sup>6</sup> Pour out your anger on the nations  
that do not | know you,\*  
and on the kingdoms that do not  
call up- | on your name!

<sup>7</sup> For they have devoured | Jacob\*  
and laid waste his habi- | tation.

<sup>8</sup> Do not remember against us  
our former in- | iquities;\*  
let your compassion come speedily to  
meet us, for we are brought | very low.

<sup>9</sup> Help us, O God of our salvation,  
for the glory | of your name;\*  
deliver us, and atone for our sins,  
for your | name's sake!

<sup>10</sup> Why should the nations say,  
"Where | is their God?"\*  
Let the avenging of the outpoured  
blood of your servants be known among  
the nations be- | fore our eyes!

<sup>11</sup> Let the groans of the prisoners  
come be- | fore you;\*  
according to your great power, preserve  
those | doomed to die!

<sup>12</sup> Return sevenfold into the lap  
of our | neighbors\*  
the taunts with which they  
have taunted you, | O Lord!

<sup>13</sup> But we your people, the sheep of your  
pasture, will give thanks to you for- | ever;\*  
from generation to generation  
we will re- | count your praise.

**Glorify be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

80

<sup>1</sup> Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you who lead Joseph | like a flock!\*  
You who are enthroned upon  
the cherubim, | shine forth.

<sup>2</sup> Before Ephraim and Benjamin  
and Ma- | nasseh,\*  
stir up your might and come to | save us!

<sup>3</sup> Restore us, | O God,\*  
let your face shine,  
that we | may be saved!

<sup>4</sup> O LORD | God of hosts,\*  
how long will you be angry  
with your | people's prayers?

<sup>5</sup> You have fed them with the | bread of tears\*  
and given them tears  
to drink in full | measure.

<sup>6</sup> You make us an object of contention  
for our | neighbors,\*  
and our enemies laugh a- | mong  
themselves.

<sup>7</sup> Restore us, O | God of hosts,\*  
let your face shine,  
that we | may be saved!

<sup>8</sup> You brought a vine out of | Egypt,\*  
you drove out the nations  
and | planted it.

<sup>9</sup> You cleared the | ground for it;\*  
it took deep root and | filled the land.

<sup>10</sup> The mountains were covered | with  
its shade,\*  
the mighty cedars with its | branches.

<sup>11</sup> It sent out its branches | to the sea\*  
and its shoots to the | River.

<sup>12</sup> Why then have you broken | down its walls,\*  
so that all who pass along the way | pluck  
its fruit?

<sup>13</sup> The boar from the forest rav- | ages it,\*  
and all that move in the field | feed on it.

- <sup>14</sup> Turn again, O | God of hosts!\*  
 Look down from | heaven, and see;  
 have regard for this vine, <sup>15</sup> the stock  
 that your right hand | planted,\*  
 and for the son whom you made  
 strong | for yourself.
- <sup>16</sup> They have burned it with fire;  
 they have | cut it down,\*  
 may they perish  
 at the rebuke | of your face!
- <sup>17</sup> But let your hand be on the man  
 of your | right hand,\*  
 the son of man whom you have made  
 strong | for yourself!
- <sup>18</sup> Then we shall not turn | back from you,\*  
 give us life, and we will call up- | on  
 your name!
- <sup>19</sup> Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts!\*  
 Let your face shine, that we | may be saved!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 81

- <sup>1</sup> Sing aloud to | God our strength,\*  
 shout for joy to the God of | Jacob!
- <sup>2</sup> Raise a song; sound the | tambourine,\*  
 the sweet lyre | with the harp.
- <sup>3</sup> Blow the trumpet at the | new moon,\*  
 at the full moon, on our | feast day.
- <sup>4</sup> For it is a statute for | Israel,\*  
 a just decree of the God of | Jacob.
- <sup>5</sup> He made it a decree in Joseph when he went  
 out over the land of | Egypt.\*  
 I hear a language I | had not known:
- <sup>6</sup> “I relieved your shoulder of the | burden,\*  
 your hands were freed from the | basket.
- <sup>7</sup> In distress you called, and I de- | livered you,\*  
 I answered you in the secret place  
 of thunder; I tested you at the waters  
 of | Meribah.

- <sup>8</sup> Hear, O my people, while I ad- | monish you!\*  
 O Israel, if you would but lis- | ten to me!
- <sup>9</sup> There shall be no strange god a- | mong you;\*  
 you shall not bow down to a | foreign god.
- <sup>10</sup> I am the LORD your God, who brought you  
 up out of the land of | Egypt.\*  
 Open your mouth wide, and I will | fill it.
- <sup>11</sup> “But my people did not listen | to my voice,\*  
 Israel would not sub- | mit to me.
- <sup>12</sup> So I gave them over to their | stubborn  
 hearts,\*  
 to follow their own | counsels.
- <sup>13</sup> Oh, that my people would lis- | ten to me,\*  
 that Israel would walk | in my ways!
- <sup>14</sup> I would soon subdue their | enemies\*  
 and turn my hand a- | gainst their foes.
- <sup>15</sup> Those who hate the LORD would | cringe  
 toward him,\*  
 and their fate would last for- | ever.
- <sup>16</sup> But he would feed you  
 with the finest | of the wheat,\*  
 and with honey from the rock  
 I would sat- | isfy you.”  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 82

- <sup>1</sup> God has taken his place  
 in the divine | council,\*  
 in the midst of the gods  
 he holds | judgment:
- <sup>2</sup> “How long will you judge un- | justly\*  
 and show partiality to the | wicked?”
- <sup>3</sup> Give justice to the weak  
 and the | fatherless,\*  
 maintain the right of the afflicted  
 and the | destitute.
- <sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and the | needy,\*  
 deliver them from the hand  
 of the | wicked.”

<sup>5</sup> They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in | darkness;\*  
all the foundations of the earth are | shaken.

<sup>6</sup> I said, | “You are gods,\*  
sons of the Most High, | all of you;

<sup>7</sup> nevertheless, like men | you shall die,\*  
and fall like | any prince.”

<sup>8</sup> Arise, O God, | judge the earth;\*  
for you shall inherit all the | nations!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 83

<sup>1</sup> O God, do not keep | silence;\*  
do not hold your peace  
or be still, | O God!

<sup>2</sup> For behold, your enemies  
make an | uproar;\*  
those who hate you have | raised  
their heads.

<sup>3</sup> They lay crafty plans against your | people;\*  
they consult together against  
your | treasured ones.

<sup>4</sup> They say, “Come, let us wipe them out  
as a | nation;\*  
let the name of Israel  
be remembered | no more!”

<sup>5</sup> For they conspire with | one accord,\*  
against you they make a | covenant—

<sup>6</sup> the tents of Edom and the | Ishmaelites,\*  
Moab and the | Hagrites,

<sup>7</sup> Gebal and Ammon and | Amalek,\*  
Philistia with the inhabi- | tants of Tyre;

<sup>8</sup> Asshur also has | joined them;\*  
they are the strong arm  
of the chil- | dren of Lot.

<sup>9</sup> Do to them as you did to | Midian,\*  
as to Sisera and Jabin at the river | Kishon,  
<sup>10</sup> who were destroyed at | Endor,\*  
who became dung | for the ground.

<sup>11</sup> Make their nobles like Or- | eb and Zeeb,\*  
all their princes like Zebah  
and | Zalmunna,

<sup>12</sup> who said, “Let us take possession | for  
ourselves\*  
of the pastures | of God.”

<sup>13</sup> O my God, make them like | whirling dust,\*  
like chaff be- | fore the wind.

<sup>14</sup> As fire consumes the | forest,\*  
as the flame sets the moun- | tains ablaze,

<sup>15</sup> so may you pursue them  
with your | tempest\*  
and terrify them with your | hurricane!

<sup>16</sup> Fill their fac- | es with shame,\*  
that they may seek your name, | O LORD.

<sup>17</sup> Let them be put to shame  
and dismayed for- | ever;\*  
let them perish | in disgrace,

<sup>18</sup> that they may know that you alone,  
whose name | is the LORD,\*  
are the Most High over | all the earth.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 84

<sup>1</sup> How lovely is your | dwelling place,\*  
O | LORD of hosts!

<sup>2</sup> My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts | of  
the LORD;\*  
my heart and flesh sing for joy  
to the | living God.

<sup>3</sup> Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may | lay her young,\*  
at your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
my King | and my God.

- <sup>4</sup> Blessèd are those who dwell | in your house,\*  
ever sing- | ing your praise!
- <sup>5</sup> Blessèd are those whose strength is | in you,\*  
in whose heart are the highways to | Zion.
- <sup>6</sup> As they go through the Valley of Baca they  
make it a | place of springs;\*  
the early rain also covers | it with pools.
- <sup>7</sup> They go from | strength to strength,\*  
each one appears before God in | Zion.
- <sup>8</sup> O LORD God of hosts, | hear my prayer;\*  
give ear, O God of | Jacob!
- <sup>9</sup> Behold our shield, | O God,\*  
look on the face of your a- | nointed!
- <sup>10</sup> For a day in your courts is better than a  
thousand | elsewhere.\*  
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the  
house of my God than dwell in the tents  
of | wickedness.
- <sup>11</sup> For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the  
LORD bestows favor and | honor.\*  
No good thing does he withhold from  
those who walk up- | rightly.
- <sup>12</sup> O | LORD of hosts,\*  
blessèd is the one who | trusts in you!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 85

- <sup>1</sup> LORD, you were favorable | to your land,\*  
you restored the fortunes of | Jacob.
- <sup>2</sup> You forgave the iniquity of your | people;\*  
you covered | all their sin.
- <sup>3</sup> You withdrew | all your wrath;\*  
you turned from your hot | anger.
- <sup>4</sup> Restore us again, O God of our sal- | vation,\*  
and put away your indignation | toward us!
- <sup>5</sup> Will you be angry with us for- | ever?\*
- Will you prolong your anger  
to all gener- | ations?

- <sup>6</sup> Will you not revive | us again,\*  
that your people may re- | joice in you?
- <sup>7</sup> Show us your steadfast love, | O LORD,\*  
and grant us your sal- | vation.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the | LORD  
will speak,\*  
for he will speak peace to his people,  
to his saints; but let them not turn back  
to | folly.
- <sup>9</sup> Surely his salvation is near  
to those who | fear him,\*  
that glory may dwell | in our land.
- <sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faith- | fulness meet,\*  
righteousness and peace kiss each | other.
- <sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs up | from the ground,\*  
and righteousness looks down | from  
the sky.
- <sup>12</sup> Yes, the LORD will give | what is good,\*  
and our land will yield its | increase.
- <sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go be- | fore him\*  
and make his foot- | steps a way.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 86

- <sup>1</sup> Incline your ear, O LORD, and | answer me,\*  
for I am poor and | needy.
- <sup>2</sup> Preserve my life, for I am | godly;\*  
save your servant, who trusts in you—  
you | are my God.
- <sup>3</sup> Be gracious to me, | O Lord,\*  
for to you do I cry | all the day.
- <sup>4</sup> Gladden the soul of your | servant,\*  
for to you, O Lord, do I lift | up my soul.
- <sup>5</sup> For you, O Lord, are good and  
for- | giving,\*  
abounding in steadfast love  
to all who call up- | on you.

- <sup>6</sup> Give ear, O LORD, | to my prayer;\*  
listen to my | plea for grace.
- <sup>7</sup> In the day of my trouble I call up- | on you,\*  
for you | answer me.
- <sup>8</sup> There is none like you among  
the gods, | O Lord,\*  
nor are there any | works like yours.
- <sup>9</sup> All the nations you have made shall come  
and worship before you, | O Lord,\*  
and shall glori- | fy your name.
- <sup>10</sup> For you are great and do | wondrous  
things,\*  
you a- | lone are God.
- <sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may  
walk | in your truth,\*  
unite my heart to | fear your name.
- <sup>12</sup> I give thanks to you, O Lord my God,  
with | my whole heart,\*  
and I will glorify your name for- | ever.
- <sup>13</sup> For great is your steadfast | love toward me,\*  
you have delivered my soul  
from the depths | of Sheol.
- <sup>14</sup> O God, insolent men have risen up against  
me; a band of ruthless men | seek my life,\*  
and they do not set you be- | fore them.
- <sup>15</sup> But you, O Lord, are a God  
merciful and | gracious,\*  
slow to anger and abounding  
in steadfast love and | faithfulness.
- <sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me,\*  
give your strength to your servant,  
and save the son of your maid- | servant.
- <sup>17</sup> Show me a sign of your | favor,\*  
that those who hate me may see and be  
put to shame because you, LORD, have  
helped me and com- | forted me.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 87

- <sup>1</sup> On the holy mount stands the city  
he | founded;\*  
<sup>2</sup> the LORD loves the gates of Zion more  
than all the dwelling places of | Jacob.
- <sup>3</sup> Glorious things of you are | spoken,\*  
O city | of God.
- <sup>4</sup> Among those who know me I mention  
Rahab and | Babylon,\*  
behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Cush—  
“This one was born | there,” they say.
- <sup>5</sup> And of Zion it shall be said, “This one  
and that one were | born in her”,\*  
for the Most High himself  
will es- | tablish her.
- <sup>6</sup> The LORD records as he registers  
the | peoples,\*  
“This one was | born there.”
- <sup>7</sup> Singers and dancers a- | like say,\*  
“All my springs | are in you.”
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 88

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, God of my sal- | vation,\*  
I cry out day and night be- | fore you.
- <sup>2</sup> Let my prayer come be- | fore you,\*  
incline your ear | to my cry!
- <sup>3</sup> For my soul is full of | troubles,\*  
and my life draws near | to Sheol.
- <sup>4</sup> I am counted among those who  
go down | to the pit,\*  
I am a man who | has no strength,
- <sup>5</sup> like one set loose among the dead,  
like the slain that lie | in the grave,\*  
like those whom you remember no more,  
for they are cut off | from your hand.
- <sup>6</sup> You have put me in the depths | of the pit,\*  
in the regions | dark and deep.

<sup>7</sup> Your wrath lies heavy up- | on me,\*  
 and you overwhelm me with | all  
 your waves.  
<sup>8</sup> You have caused my companions to | shun me;\*  
 you have made me a hor- | ror to them.  
 I am shut in so that I cannot escape; <sup>9</sup> my  
 eye grows dim through | sorrow.\*  
 Every day I call upon you, O LORD;  
 I spread out my | hands to you.  
<sup>10</sup> Do you work wonders | for the dead?\*  
 Do the departed rise up to | praise you?  
<sup>11</sup> Is your steadfast love declared | in the grave,\*  
 or your faithfulness in | Abaddon?  
<sup>12</sup> Are your wonders known in the | darkness,\*  
 or your righteousness in the land  
 of for- | getfulness?  
<sup>13</sup> But I, O LORD, | cry to you,\*  
 in the morning my prayer  
 comes be- | fore you.  
<sup>14</sup> O LORD, why do you cast my | soul away?\*  
 Why do you hide your | face from me?  
<sup>15</sup> Afflicted and close to death  
 from my | youth up,\*  
 I suffer your terrors; I am | helpless.  
<sup>16</sup> Your wrath has swept | over me;\*  
 your dreadful assaults de- | stroy me.  
<sup>17</sup> They surround me like a flood | all day long;\*  
 they close in on me to- | gether.  
<sup>18</sup> You have caused my beloved and my friend  
 to | shun me;\*  
 my companions have become | darkness.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 89

<sup>1</sup> I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD,  
 for- | ever;\*  
 with my mouth I will make known your  
 faithfulness to all gener- | ations.  
<sup>2</sup> For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up  
 for- | ever;\*  
 in the heavens you will establish  
 your | faithfulness.”  
<sup>3</sup> You have said, “I have made a covenant  
 with my | chosen one;\*  
 I have sworn to David my | servant:  
<sup>4</sup> ‘I will establish your offspring for- | ever,\*  
 and build your throne  
 for all gener- | ations.’ ”  
<sup>5</sup> Let the heavens praise your wonders, | O  
 LORD,\*  
 your faithfulness in the assembly  
 of the | holy ones!  
<sup>6</sup> For who in the skies can be compared | to  
 the LORD?\*  
 Who among the heavenly beings is | like  
 the LORD,  
<sup>7</sup> a God greatly to be feared in the council  
 of the | holy ones,\*  
 and awesome above all who  
 are a- | round him?  
<sup>8</sup> O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty  
 as you are, | O LORD,\*  
 with your faithfulness all a- | round you?  
<sup>9</sup> You rule the raging | of the sea,\*  
 when its waves rise, you | still them.  
<sup>10</sup> You crushed Rahab like a | carcass;\*  
 you scattered your enemies  
 with your | mighty arm.  
<sup>11</sup> The heavens are yours;  
 the earth al- | so is yours,\*  
 the world and all that is in it,  
 you have | founded them.

- <sup>12</sup> The north and the south,  
you have cre- | ated them;\*  
Tabor and Hermon joyously | praise  
your name.
- <sup>13</sup> You have a | mighty arm;\*  
strong is your hand, high your | right  
hand.
- <sup>14</sup> Righteousness and justice are the  
foundation | of your throne;\*  
steadfast love and faithfulness  
go be- | fore you.
- <sup>15</sup> Blessèd are the people who know  
the | festal shout,\*  
who walk, O LORD, in the light | of  
your face,
- <sup>16</sup> who exult in your name | all the day\*  
and in your righteousness are ex- | alted.
- <sup>17</sup> For you are the glory | of their strength;\*  
by your favor our horn is ex- | alted.
- <sup>18</sup> For our shield belongs | to the LORD,\*  
our king to the Holy One of | Israel.
- <sup>19</sup> Of old you spoke in a vision to your godly  
one, and said: "I have granted help to one  
who is | mighty;\*  
I have exalted one chosen from  
the | people.
- <sup>20</sup> I have found David, my | servant;\*  
with my holy oil I have a- | nointed him,
- <sup>21</sup> so that my hand shall be estab- | lished  
with him;\*  
my arm also shall | strengthen him.
- <sup>22</sup> The enemy shall not out- | wit him;\*  
the wicked shall not | humble him.
- <sup>23</sup> I will crush his foes be- | fore him\*  
and strike down those who | hate him.
- <sup>24</sup> My faithfulness and my steadfast love  
shall | be with him,\*  
and in my name shall his horn  
be ex- | alted.
- <sup>25</sup> I will set his hand | on the sea\*  
and his right hand on the | rivers.
- <sup>26</sup> He shall cry to me, 'You are my | Father,\*  
my God, and the Rock of my sal- | vation.'
- <sup>27</sup> And I will make him the | firstborn,\*  
the highest of the kings | of the earth.
- <sup>28</sup> My steadfast love I will keep  
for him for- | ever,\*  
and my covenant will stand | firm  
for him.
- <sup>29</sup> I will establish his offspring for- | ever\*  
and his throne as the days  
of the | heavens.
- <sup>30</sup> If his children for- | sake my law\*  
and do not walk according  
to my | just decrees,
- <sup>31</sup> if they violate my | statutes\*  
and do not keep my com- | mandments,
- <sup>32</sup> then I will punish their transgression | with  
the rod\*  
and their iniqui- | ty with stripes,
- <sup>33</sup> but I will not remove from him  
my | steadfast love\*  
or be false to my | faithfulness.
- <sup>34</sup> I will not violate my | covenant\*  
or alter the word that went forth | from  
my lips.
- <sup>35</sup> Once for all I have sworn by my | holiness;\*  
I will not lie to | David.
- <sup>36</sup> His offspring shall endure for- | ever,\*  
his throne as long as the sun be- | fore me.
- <sup>37</sup> Like the moon it shall be established  
for- | ever,\*  
a faithful witness | in the skies."
- <sup>38</sup> But now you have cast off and re- | jected;\*  
you are full of wrath against  
your a- | nointed.
- <sup>39</sup> You have renounced the covenant  
with your | servant;\*  
you have defiled his crown | in the dust.
- <sup>40</sup> You have breached | all his walls;\*  
you have laid his strongholds in | ruins.

41 All who pass by | plunder him;\*  
 he has become the scorn of his | neighbors.  
 42 You have exalted the right hand | of his  
 foes;\*  
 you have made all his ene- | mies rejoice.  
 43 You have also turned back the edge | of  
 his sword,\*  
 and you have not made him stand  
 in | battle.  
 44 You have made his splen- | dor to cease\*  
 and cast his throne | to the ground.  
 45 You have cut short the days | of his youth;\*  
 you have covered | him with shame.  
 46 How long, O LORD?  
 Will you hide yourself for- | ever?\*
 How long will your wrath | burn  
 like fire?  
 47 Remember how short my | time is!\*
 For what vanity you have created  
 all the chil- | dren of man!  
 48 What man can live and never | see death?\*
 Who can deliver his soul from  
 the power | of Sheol?  
 49 Lord, where is your steadfast | love of old,\*  
 which by your faithfulness  
 you swore to | David?  
 50 Remember, O Lord, how your  
 ser- | vants are mocked,\*  
 and how I bear in my heart the insults  
 of all the many | nations,  
 51 with which your enemies mock, | O LORD,\*  
 with which they mock the footsteps  
 of your a- | nointed.  
 52 Blessed be the LORD for- | ever!\*
 Amen and | Amen.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 90

1 Lord, you have been our | dwelling place\*  
 in all gener- | ations.  
 2 Before the mountains were brought forth,  
 or ever you had formed the earth | and  
 the world,\*  
 from everlasting to everlasting | you  
 are God.  
 3 You return | man to dust\*  
 and say, "Return, O chil- | dren of man!"  
 4 For a thousand years in your sight are but  
 as yesterday when | it is past,\*  
 or as a watch | in the night.  
 5 You sweep them away as | with a flood,\*  
 they are like a dream, like grass that is  
 renewed in the | morning:  
 6 in the morning it flourishes and | is  
 renewed,\*  
 in the evening it fades and | withers.  
 7 For we are brought to an end  
 by your | anger,\*  
 by your wrath we | are dismayed.  
 8 You have set our iniquities be- | fore you,\*  
 our secret sins in the light  
 of your | presence.  
 9 For all our days pass away un- | der  
 your wrath,\*  
 we bring our years to an end | like a sigh.  
 10 The years of our life are seventy, or even  
 by reason of strength | eighty;\*  
 yet their span is but toil and trouble;  
 they are soon gone, and we | fly away.  
 11 Who considers the power of your | anger,\*  
 and your wrath according to the | fear  
 of you?  
 12 So teach us to number | our days\*  
 that we may get a heart of | wisdom.  
 13 Return, O LORD! | How long?\*
 Have pity on your | servants!

- <sup>14</sup> Satisfy us in the morning  
with your | steadfast love,\*  
that we may rejoice and  
be glad | all our days.
- <sup>15</sup> Make us glad for as many days  
as you have af- | flicted us,\*  
and for as many years as we  
have seen | evil.
- <sup>16</sup> Let your work be shown to your | servants,\*  
and your glorious power  
to their | children.
- <sup>17</sup> Let the favor of the Lord our God  
be upon us, and establish the work  
of our hands up- | on us;\*  
yes, establish the work | of our hands!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 91

- <sup>1</sup> He who dwells in the shelter  
of the | Most High\*  
will abide in the shadow  
of the Al- | mighty.
- <sup>2</sup> I will say to the LORD, “My refuge  
and my | fortress,\*  
my God, in | whom I trust.”
- <sup>3</sup> For he will deliver you from the snare  
of the | fowler\*  
and from the deadly | pestilence.
- <sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his pinions, and  
under his wings you will find | refuge;\*  
his faithfulness is a shield and | buckler.
- <sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror | of the night,\*  
nor the arrow that | flies by day,
- <sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in | darkness,\*  
nor the destruction that wastes  
at | noonday.
- <sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your | right hand,\*  
but it will not come | near you.

- <sup>8</sup> You will only look | with your eyes\*  
and see the recompense of the | wicked.
- <sup>9</sup> Because you have made the LORD  
your | dwelling place—\*  
the Most High, who is my | refuge—
- <sup>10</sup> no evil shall be allowed to be- | fall you,\*  
no plague come | near your tent.
- <sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels  
con- | cerning you\*  
to guard you in | all your ways.
- <sup>12</sup> On their hands they will | bear you up,\*  
lest you strike your foot a- | gainst a stone.
- <sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the | adder;\*  
the young lion and the serpent you  
will trample | underfoot.
- <sup>14</sup> “Because he holds fast to me in love,  
I will de- | liver him;\*  
I will protect him, because he | knows  
my name.
- <sup>15</sup> When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
I will be with him in | trouble;\*  
I will rescue him and | honor him.
- <sup>16</sup> With long life I will sat- | isfy him\*  
and show him my sal- | vation.”  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 92

- <sup>1</sup> It is good to give thanks | to the LORD,\*  
to sing praises to your name, | O Most  
High;
- <sup>2</sup> to declare your steadfast love  
in the | morning,\*  
and your faithful- | ness by night,
- <sup>3</sup> to the music of the lute | and the harp,\*  
to the melody | of the lyre.
- <sup>4</sup> For you, O LORD, have made me  
glad | by your work;\*  
at the works of your hands I | sing for joy.

- <sup>5</sup> How great are your works, | O LORD!\*
- Your thoughts are | very deep!
- <sup>6</sup> The stupid man cannot know; the fool  
cannot under- | stand this:\*
- <sup>7</sup> that though the wicked sprout like  
grass and all evildoers flourish, they are  
doomed to destruction for- | ever;
- <sup>8</sup> but you, | O LORD,\*  
are on high for- | ever.
- <sup>9</sup> For behold, your enemies, O LORD, for  
behold, your enemies shall | perish;\*
- all evildoers shall be | scattered.
- <sup>10</sup> But you have exalted my horn like that  
of the | wild ox;\*
- you have poured over me | fresh oil.
- <sup>11</sup> My eyes have seen the downfall  
of my | enemies;\*
- my ears have heard the doom  
of my evil as- | sailants.
- <sup>12</sup> The righteous flourish like the | palm tree\*  
and grow like a cedar in | Lebanon.
- <sup>13</sup> They are planted in the house | of the LORD;\*
- they flourish in the courts | of our God.
- <sup>14</sup> They still bear fruit in | old age;\*
- they are ever full of | sap and green,
- <sup>15</sup> to declare that the LORD is | upright;\*
- he is my rock, and there is no  
unrighteousness | in him.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 93

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD reigns; he is robed in | majesty;\*
- the LORD is robed; he has put  
on strength | as his belt.
- Yes, the world is es- | tablished;\*
- it shall nev- | er be moved.
- <sup>2</sup> Your throne is established | from of old;\*
- you are from ever- | lasting.

- <sup>3</sup> The floods have lifted up, O LORD,  
the floods have lifted | up their voice;\*
- the floods lift up their | roaring.
- <sup>4</sup> Mightier than the thunders of many waters,  
mightier than the waves | of the sea,\*
- the LORD on high is | mighty!
- <sup>5</sup> Your decrees are very | trustworthy;\*
- holiness befits your house, O LORD,  
for- | evermore.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 94

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, God of | vengeance,\*  
O God of vengeance, | shine forth!
- <sup>2</sup> Rise up, O judge | of the earth;\*
- repay to the proud what | they deserve!
- <sup>3</sup> O LORD, how long shall the | wicked,\*  
how long shall the wick- | ed exult?
- <sup>4</sup> They pour out their ar- | rogant words;\*
- all the evil- | doers boast.
- <sup>5</sup> They crush your people, | O LORD,\*  
and afflict your | heritage.
- <sup>6</sup> They kill the widow and the | sojourner,\*  
and murder the | fatherless;
- <sup>7</sup> and they say, “The LORD | does not see;\*
- the God of Jacob does | not perceive.”
- <sup>8</sup> Understand, O dullest of the | people!\*
- Fools, when will | you be wise?
- <sup>9</sup> He who planted the ear, does | he not hear?\*
- He who formed the eye, does | he not see?
- <sup>10</sup> He who disciplines the nations,  
does he | not rebuke?\*
- He who teaches man | knowledge—
- <sup>11</sup> the LORD—knows the | thoughts of man,\*  
that they are | but a breath.
- <sup>12</sup> Blessèd is the man whom you  
discipline, | O LORD,\*  
and whom you teach out | of your law,

<sup>13</sup> to give him rest from days of | trouble,\*  
 until a pit is dug for the | wicked.  
<sup>14</sup> For the LORD will not forsake his | people;\*  
 he will not abandon his | heritage;  
<sup>15</sup> for justice will return to the | righteous,\*  
 and all the upright in heart will | follow  
 it.  
<sup>16</sup> Who rises up for me against the | wicked?\*
 Who stands up for me  
 against evil- | doers?  
<sup>17</sup> If the LORD had not | been my help,\*  
 my soul would soon have lived  
 in the land of | silence.  
<sup>18</sup> When I thought, “My | foot slips,”\*  
 your steadfast love, O LORD, | held  
 me up.  
<sup>19</sup> When the cares of my heart are | many,\*  
 your consolations | cheer my soul.  
<sup>20</sup> Can wicked rulers be allied | with you,\*  
 those who frame injustice by | statute?  
<sup>21</sup> They band together against the life  
 of the | righteous\*  
 and condemn the inno- | cent to death.  
<sup>22</sup> But the LORD has become my | stronghold,\*  
 and my God the rock of my | refuge.  
<sup>23</sup> He will bring back on them their iniquity  
 and wipe them out for their | wickedness;\*  
 the LORD our God will | wipe them out.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

95

<sup>1</sup> Oh come, let us sing | to the LORD,\*  
 let us make a joyful noise to the rock  
 of our sal- | vation!  
<sup>2</sup> Let us come into his presence  
 with thanks- | giving;\*  
 let us make a joyful noise to him  
 with | songs of praise!

<sup>3</sup> For the LORD is a | great God,\*  
 and a great King a- | bove all gods.  
<sup>4</sup> In his hand are the depths | of the earth;\*  
 the heights of the mountains are his | also.  
<sup>5</sup> The sea is his, for he | made it,\*  
 and his hands formed the | dry land.  
<sup>6</sup> Oh come, let us worship and | bow down;\*  
 let us kneel before the LORD, our | Maker!  
<sup>7</sup> For he | is our God,\*  
 and we are the people of his pasture, and  
 the sheep | of his hand.  
 Today, if you | hear his voice,\*  
<sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts, as at  
 Meribah, as on the day at Massah  
 in the | wilderness,  
<sup>9</sup> when your fathers put me | to the test\*  
 and put me to the proof,  
 though they had | seen my work.  
<sup>10</sup> For forty years I loathed that generation  
 and said, “They are a people who  
 go astray | in their heart,\*  
 and they have not | known my ways.”  
<sup>11</sup> Therefore I swore | in my wrath,\*  
 “They shall not enter | my rest.”  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

96

<sup>1</sup> Oh sing to the LORD a | new song,\*  
 sing to the LORD, | all the earth!  
<sup>2</sup> Sing to the LORD, | bless his name;\*  
 tell of his salvation from | day to day.  
<sup>3</sup> Declare his glory among the | nations,\*  
 his marvelous works among  
 all the | peoples!  
<sup>4</sup> For great is the LORD, and greatly | to  
 be praised,\*  
 he is to be feared a- | bove all gods.

<sup>5</sup> For all the gods of the peoples  
are worthless | idols,\*  
but the LORD made the | heavens.

<sup>6</sup> Splendor and majesty are be- | fore him;\*  
strength and beauty are  
in his sanctu- | ary.

<sup>7</sup> Ascribe to the LORD, O families  
of the | peoples,\*  
ascribe to the LORD glo- | ry and strength!

<sup>8</sup> Ascribe to the LORD the glory | due  
his name;\*  
bring an offering, and come in- | to  
his courts!

<sup>9</sup> Worship the LORD in the splendor  
of | holiness,\*  
tremble before him, | all the earth!

<sup>10</sup> Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns!  
Yes, the world is established;  
it shall nev- | er be moved;\*  
he will judge the peoples with | equity.”

<sup>11</sup> Let the heavens be glad,  
and let the | earth rejoice;\*  
let the sea roar, and all that fills it; <sup>12</sup> let  
the field exult, and every- | thing in it!  
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for  
joy <sup>13</sup> before the LORD, | for he comes,\*  
for he comes to | judge the earth.  
He will judge the world in | righteousness,\*  
and the peoples in his | faithfulness.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 97

<sup>1</sup> The LORD reigns, let the | earth rejoice;\*  
let the many coast- | lands be glad!

<sup>2</sup> Clouds and thick darkness are  
all a- | round him;\*  
righteousness and justice are the  
foundation | of his throne.

<sup>3</sup> Fire goes be- | fore him\*  
and burns up his adversaries | all around.

<sup>4</sup> His lightnings light | up the world;\*  
the earth sees and | trembles.

<sup>5</sup> The mountains melt like wax be- | fore  
the LORD,\*  
before the Lord of | all the earth.

<sup>6</sup> The heavens proclaim his | righteousness,\*  
and all the peoples see his | glory.

<sup>7</sup> All worshipers of images are put to shame,  
who make their boast in worthless | idols;\*  
worship him, | all you gods!

<sup>8</sup> Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters  
of Ju- | dah rejoice,\*  
because of your judgments, | O LORD.

<sup>9</sup> For you, O LORD, are most high over | all  
the earth;\*  
you are exalted far a- | bove all gods.

<sup>10</sup> O you who love the LORD, hate | evil!\*  
He preserves the lives of his saints;  
he delivers them from the hand  
of the | wicked.

<sup>11</sup> Light is sown for the | righteous,\*  
and joy for the up- | right in heart.

<sup>12</sup> Rejoice in the LORD, O you | righteous,\*  
and give thanks to his | holy name!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 98

<sup>1</sup> Oh sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done | marvelous things!\*  
His right hand and his holy arm have  
worked salva- | tion for him.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD has made known  
his sal- | vation;\*  
he has revealed his righteousness  
in the sight of the | nations.

<sup>3</sup> He 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.

<sup>4</sup> Make a joyful noise to the LORD, | all  
 the earth;\*  
 break forth into joyous song  
 and sing | praises!

<sup>5</sup> Sing praises to the LORD | with the lyre,\*  
 with the lyre and the sound of | melody!

<sup>6</sup> With trumpets and the sound | of the horn\*  
 make a joyful noise before the | King,  
 the LORD!

<sup>7</sup> Let the sea roar, and all that | fills it;\*  
 the world and those who | dwell in it!

<sup>8</sup> Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills  
 sing for joy together <sup>9</sup> be- | fore the LORD,\*  
 for he comes to | judge the earth.  
 He will judge the world with | righteousness,\*  
 and the peoples with | equity.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

99

<sup>1</sup> The LORD reigns; let the peoples | tremble!\*  
 He sits enthroned upon the cherubim;  
 let the | earth quake!

<sup>2</sup> The LORD is great in | Zion;\*  
 he is exalted over all the | peoples.

<sup>3</sup> Let them praise your great and | awesome  
 name!\*

Ho- | ly is he!

<sup>4</sup> The King in his might loves | justice.\*  
 You have established equity;  
 you have executed justice and  
 righteousness in | Jacob.

<sup>5</sup> Exalt the LORD our God; worship  
 at his | footstool!\*

Ho- | ly is he!

<sup>6</sup> Moses and Aaron were among his priests,  
 Samuel also was among those who called  
 up- | on his name.\*  
 They called to the LORD,  
 and he | answered them.

<sup>7</sup> In the pillar of the cloud he | spoke  
 to them;\*  
 they kept his testimonies  
 and the statute that he | gave them.

<sup>8</sup> O LORD our God, you | answered them;\*  
 you were a forgiving God to them,  
 but an avenger of their wrong- | doings.

<sup>9</sup> Exalt the LORD our God, and worship  
 at his holy | mountain;\*  
 for the LORD our God is | holy!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

100

<sup>1</sup> Make a joyful noise to the LORD, | all  
 the earth!\*

<sup>2</sup> Serve the LORD with gladness!  
 Come into his presence with | singing!

<sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD, | he is God!\*  
 It is he who made us, and we are his; he  
 are his people, and the sheep  
 of his | pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
 and his | courts with praise!\*

Give thanks to him; | bless his name!

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good; his steadfast love  
 endures for- | ever,\*  
 and his faithfulness to all gener- | ations.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 101

- <sup>1</sup> I will sing of steadfast love and | justice;\*  
to you, O LORD, I will make | music.
- <sup>2</sup> I will ponder the way that is blameless.  
Oh when will you | come to me?\*
- I will walk with integrity  
of heart with- | in my house;
- <sup>3</sup> I will not set before my eyes anything  
that is | worthless.\*
- I hate the work of those who fall away;  
it shall not | cling to me.
- <sup>4</sup> A perverse heart shall be | far from me;\*  
I will know nothing of | evil.
- <sup>5</sup> Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly  
I | will destroy.\*
- Whoever has a haughty look and  
an arrogant heart I will | not endure.
- <sup>6</sup> I will look with favor on the faithful  
in the land, that they may | dwell with me;\*  
he who walks in the way that is blameless  
shall minis- | ter to me.
- <sup>7</sup> No one who practices deceit shall dwell | in  
my house;\*
- no one who utters lies shall continue  
be- | fore my eyes.
- <sup>8</sup> Morning by morning I will destroy  
all the wicked | in the land,\*  
cutting off all the evildoers  
from the city | of the LORD.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 102

- <sup>1</sup> Hear my prayer, | O LORD;\*  
let my cry | come to you!
- <sup>2</sup> Do not hide your face from me in the day  
of | my distress!\*
- Incline your ear to me; answer me  
speedily in the day | when I call!

- <sup>3</sup> For my days pass a- | way like smoke,\*  
and my bones burn like a | furnace.
- <sup>4</sup> My heart is struck down like grass  
and has | withered;\*
- I forget to | eat my bread.
- <sup>5</sup> Because of my loud | groaning\*  
my bones cling | to my flesh.
- <sup>6</sup> I am like a desert owl of the | wilderness,\*  
like an owl of the waste | places;
- <sup>7</sup> I | lie awake;\*
- I am like a lonely sparrow  
on the | housetop.
- <sup>8</sup> All the day my enemies | taunt me;\*  
those who deride me use  
my name | for a curse.
- <sup>9</sup> For I eat ashes | like bread\*  
and mingle tears | with my drink,
- <sup>10</sup> because of your indignation and | anger,\*  
for you have taken me up and | thrown  
me down.
- <sup>11</sup> My days are like an evening | shadow;\*  
I wither a- | way like grass.
- <sup>12</sup> But you, O LORD, are enthroned for- |  
ever;\*
- you are remembered throughout all  
gener- | ations.
- <sup>13</sup> You will arise and have pity on | Zion;\*  
it is the time to favor her;  
the appointed | time has come.
- <sup>14</sup> For your servants hold her | stones dear\*  
and have pity | on her dust.
- <sup>15</sup> Nations will fear the name | of the LORD,\*  
and all the kings of the earth  
will fear your | glory.
- <sup>16</sup> For the LORD builds up | Zion;\*  
he appears in his | glory;
- <sup>17</sup> he regards the prayer of the | destitute\*  
and does not de- | spise their prayer.
- <sup>18</sup> Let this be recorded for a genera- | tion  
to come,\*

103

so that a people yet to be created  
 may | praise the LORD:  
<sup>19</sup> that he looked down from his | holy height;\*  
 from heaven the LORD looked | at  
 the earth,  
<sup>20</sup> to hear the groans of the | prisoners,\*  
 to set free those who were | doomed  
 to die,  
<sup>21</sup> that they may declare in Zion the name | of  
 the LORD,\*  
 and in Jerusa- | lem his praise,  
<sup>22</sup> when peoples gather to- | gether,\*  
 and kingdoms, to wor- | ship the LORD.  
<sup>23</sup> He has broken my strength in | midcourse;\*  
 he has shortened | my days.  
<sup>24</sup> “O my God,” I say, “take me not away  
 in the midst | of my days—\*  
 you whose years endure throughout  
 all gener- | ations!”  
<sup>25</sup> Of old you laid the foundation | of the earth,\*  
 and the heavens are the work | of your  
 hands.  
<sup>26</sup> They will perish, but you | will remain;\*  
 they will all wear out like a | garment.  
 You will change them like a robe, and they  
 will | pass away,\*  
<sup>27</sup> but you are the same,  
 and your years | have no end.  
<sup>28</sup> The children of your servants shall | dwell  
 secure;\*  
 their offspring shall be established  
 be- | fore you.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

<sup>1</sup> Bless the LORD, | O my soul,\*  
 and all that is within me,  
 bless his | holy name!  
<sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, | O my soul,\*  
 and forget not all his | benefits,  
<sup>3</sup> who forgives all your in- | iquity,\*  
 who heals all your dis- | eases,  
<sup>4</sup> who redeems your life | from the pit,\*  
 who crowns you with steadfast love  
 and | mercy,  
<sup>5</sup> who satisfies | you with good\*  
 so that your youth is renewed like  
 the | eagle’s.  
<sup>6</sup> The LORD works | righteousness\*  
 and justice for all who | are oppressed.  
<sup>7</sup> He made known his ways to | Moses,\*  
 his acts to the people of | Israel.  
<sup>8</sup> The LORD is merciful and | gracious,\*  
 slow to anger and abounding  
 in | steadfast love.  
<sup>9</sup> He will not | always chide,\*  
 nor will he keep his anger for- | ever.  
<sup>10</sup> He does not deal with us according | to  
 our sins,\*  
 nor repay us according  
 to our in- | iquities.  
<sup>11</sup> For as high as the heavens are a- | bove  
 the earth,\*  
 so great is his steadfast love  
 toward those who | fear him;  
<sup>12</sup> as far as the east is | from the west,\*  
 so far does he remove our  
 transgres- | sions from us.  
<sup>13</sup> As a father shows compassion  
 to his | children,\*  
 so the LORD shows compassion  
 to those who | fear him.  
<sup>14</sup> For he | knows our frame;\*  
 he remembers that | we are dust.

15 As for man, his days | are like grass;\*  
 he flourishes like a flower | of the field;  
 16 for the wind passes over it, and | it is gone,\*  
 and its place knows | it no more.  
 17 But the steadfast love of the LORD  
 is from everlasting to everlasting  
 on those who | fear him,\*  
 and his righteousness  
 to children's | children,  
 18 to those who keep his | covenant\*  
 and remember to do his  
 com- | mandments.  
 19 The LORD has established his throne  
 in the | heavens,\*  
 and his kingdom rules | over all.  
 20 Bless the LORD, O you his | angels,\*  
 you mighty ones who do his word,  
 obeying the voice | of his word!  
 21 Bless the LORD, | all his hosts,\*  
 his ministers, who | do his will!  
 22 Bless the LORD, all his works,  
 in all places of his do- | minion.\*  
 Bless the LORD, | O my soul!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 104

1 Bless the LORD, | O my soul!\*  
 O LORD my God, you are | very great!  
 You are clothed with splendor and | majesty,\*  
 2 covering yourself with light  
 as with a garment, stretching out  
 the heavens | like a tent.  
 3 He lays the beams of his chambers  
 on the | waters;\*  
 he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides  
 on the wings | of the wind;  
 4 he makes his mes- | sengers winds,\*  
 his ministers a | flaming fire.

5 He set the earth on its foun- | dations,\*  
 so that it should nev- | er be moved.  
 6 You covered it with the deep  
 as with a | garment;\*  
 the waters stood above the | mountains.  
 7 At your re- | buke they fled;\*  
 at the sound of your thunder  
 they | took to flight.  
 8 The mountains rose, the valleys | sank down\*  
 to the place that you appoint- | ed  
 for them.  
 9 You set a boundary that they | may not pass,\*  
 so that they might not again cov- | er  
 the earth.  
 10 You make springs gush forth  
 in the | valleys;\*  
 they flow be- | tween the hills;  
 11 they give drink to every beast | of the field;\*  
 the wild donkeys | quench their thirst.  
 12 Beside them the birds  
 of the | heavens dwell;\*  
 they sing among the | branches.  
 13 From your lofty abode you water  
 the | mountains;\*  
 the earth is satisfied  
 with the fruit | of your work.  
 14 You cause the grass to grow for the  
 livestock and plants for man to | cultivate,\*  
 that he may bring forth food from the  
 earth <sup>15</sup> and wine to gladden the | heart  
 of man,  
 oil to make his | face shine\*  
 and bread to strengthen | man's heart.  
 16 The trees of the LORD are watered  
 a- | bundantly,\*  
 the cedars of Lebanon that he | planted.  
 17 In them the birds | build their nests;\*  
 the stork has her home in the | fir trees.  
 18 The high mountains are for the | wild goats;\*  
 the rocks are a refuge  
 for the rock | badgers.

<sup>19</sup> He made the moon to mark the | seasons;\*  
the sun knows its time for | setting.

<sup>20</sup> You make darkness, and | it is night,\*  
when all the beasts of the forest | creep  
about.

<sup>21</sup> The young lions roar | for their prey,\*  
seeking their | food from God.

<sup>22</sup> When the sun rises, they | steal away\*  
and lie down | in their dens.

<sup>23</sup> Man goes out | to his work\*  
and to his labor until the | evening.

<sup>24</sup> O LORD, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom have you | made them all,\*  
the earth is full of your | creatures.

<sup>25</sup> Here is the sea, | great and wide,\*  
which teems with creatures innumerable,  
living things both | small and great.

<sup>26</sup> There | go the ships,\*  
and Leviathan, which you formed  
to | play in it.

<sup>27</sup> These all | look to you,\*  
to give them their food in due | season.

<sup>28</sup> When you give it to them,  
they gath- | er it up;\*  
when you open your hand,  
they are filled with | good things.

<sup>29</sup> When you hide your face,  
they | are dismayed;\*  
when you take away their breath,  
they die and return | to their dust.

<sup>30</sup> When you send forth your Spirit,  
they are cre- | ated,\*  
and you renew the face | of the ground.

<sup>31</sup> May the glory of the LORD  
endure for- | ever;\*  
may the LORD rejoice | in his works,  
<sup>32</sup> who looks on the earth and it | trembles,\*  
who touches the mountains | and they  
smoke!

<sup>33</sup> I will sing to the LORD as long | as I live;\*  
I will sing praise to my God  
while I have | being.

<sup>34</sup> May my meditation be pleas- | ing to him,\*  
for I rejoice | in the LORD.

<sup>35</sup> Let sinners be consumed from the earth,  
and let the wicked | be no more!\*

Bless the LORD, O my soul! | Praise  
the LORD!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 105

<sup>1</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD; call up- | on  
his name;\*  
make known his deeds  
among the | peoples!

<sup>2</sup> Sing to him, sing prais- | es to him;\*  
tell of all his | wondrous works!

<sup>3</sup> Glory in his | holy name;\*  
let the hearts of those who seek  
the | LORD rejoice!

<sup>4</sup> Seek the LORD | and his strength;\*  
seek his presence con- | tinually!

<sup>5</sup> Remember the wondrous works  
that | he has done,\*  
his miracles, and the judgments  
he | uttered,

<sup>6</sup> O offspring of Abraham, his | servant,\*  
children of Jacob, his | chosen ones!

<sup>7</sup> He is the | LORD our God;\*  
his judgments are in | all the earth.

<sup>8</sup> He remembers his covenant for- | ever,\*  
the word that he commanded,  
for a thousand gener- | ations,

<sup>9</sup> the covenant that he made with | Abraham,\*  
his sworn promise to | Isaac,

<sup>10</sup> which he confirmed to Jacob as a | statute,\*  
to Israel as an everlasting  
covenant, | <sup>11</sup> saying,  
“To you I will give the land of | Canaan\*  
as your portion for an in- | heritance.”

12 When they were few in | number,\*  
 of little account, and sojourners | in it,  
 13 wandering from nation to | nation,\*  
 from one kingdom to another | people,  
 14 he allowed no one to op- | press them,\*  
 he rebuked kings on their  
 account, | <sup>15</sup> saying,  
 “Touch not my a- | nointed ones,\*  
 do my prophets | no harm!”  
 16 When he summoned a famine | on the  
 land\*  
 and broke all sup- | ply of bread,  
 17 he had sent a man a- | head of them,\*  
 Joseph, who was sold | as a slave.  
 18 His feet were hurt with | fetters;\*  
 his neck was put in a col- | lar of iron;  
 19 until what he had said | came to pass,\*  
 the word of the LORD | tested him.  
 20 The king sent and re- | leased him;\*  
 the ruler of the peoples | set him free;  
 21 he made him lord | of his house\*  
 and ruler of all his pos- | sessions,  
 22 to bind his princes at his | pleasure\*  
 and to teach his elders | wisdom.  
 23 Then Israel came to | Egypt;\*  
 Jacob sojourned in the | land of Ham.  
 24 And the LORD made his  
 people very | fruitful\*  
 and made them stronger | than their foes.  
 25 He turned their hearts to hate his | people,\*  
 to deal craftily with his | servants.  
 26 He sent Moses, his | servant,\*  
 and Aaron, whom he had | chosen.  
 27 They performed his signs a- | mong them\*  
 and miracles in the | land of Ham.  
 28 He sent darkness, and made the | land dark;\*  
 they did not rebel a- | gainst his words.  
 29 He turned their waters | into blood\*  
 and caused their | fish to die.  
 30 Their land | swarmed with frogs,\*  
 even in the chambers | of their kings.

31 He spoke, and there came | swarms of flies,\*  
 and gnats throughout their | country.  
 32 He gave them | hail for rain,\*  
 and fiery lightning bolts | through  
 their land.  
 33 He struck down their vines and | fig trees,\*  
 and shattered the trees of their | country.  
 34 He spoke, and the | locusts came,\*  
 young locusts without | number,  
 35 which devoured all the vegetation | in  
 their land\*  
 and ate up the fruit | of their ground.  
 36 He struck down all the firstborn | in  
 their land,\*  
 the firstfruits of | all their strength.  
 37 Then he brought out Israel with sil- | ver  
 and gold,\*  
 and there was none among his tribes  
 who | stumbled.  
 38 Egypt was glad when they de- | parted,\*  
 for dread of them had fallen up- | on it.  
 39 He spread a cloud for a | covering,\*  
 and fire to give | light by night.  
 40 They asked, and he | brought quail,\*  
 and gave them bread from heaven  
 in a- | bundance.  
 41 He opened the rock, and water | gushed  
 out;\*  
 it flowed through the desert like a | river.  
 42 For he remembered his holy | promise,\*  
 and Abraham, his | servant.  
 43 So he brought his people | out with joy,\*  
 his chosen ones with | singing.  
 44 And he gave them the lands of the | nations,\*  
 and they took possession of the fruit of  
 the | peoples' toil,  
 45 that they might keep his | statutes\*  
 and observe his laws. | Praise the LORD!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 106

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for | he is good,\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!
- <sup>2</sup> Who can utter the mighty deeds | of the LORD,\*  
or declare | all his praise?
- <sup>3</sup> Blessed are they who observe | justice,\*  
who do righteousness | at all times!
- <sup>4</sup> Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your | people,\*  
help me when you | save them,  
<sup>5</sup> that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your | nation,\*  
that I may glory with your in- | heritance.
- <sup>6</sup> Both we and our fathers | have sinned,\*  
we have committed iniquity;  
we have done | wickedness.
- <sup>7</sup> Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your | wondrous works;\*  
they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the Sea, at the | Red Sea.
- <sup>8</sup> Yet he saved them for his | name's sake,\*  
that he might make known his | mighty power.
- <sup>9</sup> He rebuked the Red Sea, and it be- | came dry,\*  
and he led them through the deep as through a | desert.
- <sup>10</sup> So he saved them from the hand | of the foe\*  
and redeemed them from the power of the | enemy.
- <sup>11</sup> And the waters covered their adver- | saries,\*  
not one of | them was left.
- <sup>12</sup> Then they be- | lieved his words,\*  
they | sang his praise.
- <sup>13</sup> But they soon for- | got his works,\*  
they did not wait for his | counsel.

- <sup>14</sup> But they had a wanton craving in the | wilderness,\*  
and put God to the test in the | desert;
- <sup>15</sup> he gave them | what they asked,\*  
but sent a wasting disease a- | mong them.
- <sup>16</sup> When men in the camp were jealous of | Moses\*  
and Aaron, the holy one | of the LORD,  
<sup>17</sup> the earth opened and swallowed up | Dathan,\*  
and covered the company of | Abiram.
- <sup>18</sup> Fire also broke out in their | company;\*  
the flame burned up the | wicked.
- <sup>19</sup> They made a calf in | Horeb\*  
and worshiped a metal | image.
- <sup>20</sup> They exchanged the glo- | ry of God\*  
for the image of an ox that | eats grass.
- <sup>21</sup> They forgot God, their | Savior,\*  
who had done great things in | Egypt,  
<sup>22</sup> wondrous works in the | land of Ham,\*  
and awesome deeds by the | Red Sea.
- <sup>23</sup> Therefore he said he would de- | stroy them—\*  
had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from de- | stroying them.
- <sup>24</sup> Then they despised the | pleasant land,\*  
having no faith in his | promise.
- <sup>25</sup> They murmured | in their tents,\*  
and did not obey the voice | of the LORD.
- <sup>26</sup> Therefore he raised his hand and | swore to them\*  
that he would make them fall in the | wilderness,  
<sup>27</sup> and would make their offspring fall among the | nations,\*  
scattering them a- | mong the lands.
- <sup>28</sup> Then they yoked themselves to the Baal | of Peor,\*  
and ate sacrifices offered | to the dead;

29 they provoked the LORD to anger | with  
 their deeds,\*  
 and a plague broke out a- | mong them.  
 30 Then Phinehas stood up and | intervened,\*  
 and the | plague was stayed.  
 31 And that was counted to him  
 as | righteousness\*  
 from generation to generation for- | ever.  
 32 They angered him at the waters  
 of | Meribah,\*  
 and it went ill with Moses  
 on | their account,  
 33 for they made his spirit | bitter,\*  
 and he spoke rashly | with his lips.  
 34 They did not destroy the | peoples,\*  
 as the LORD com- | manded them,  
 35 but they mixed with the | nations\*  
 and learned to do | as they did.  
 36 They served their | idols,\*  
 which became a | snare to them.  
 37 They sacrificed | their sons\*  
 and their daughters to the | demons;  
 38 they poured out innocent blood,  
 the blood of their sons and | daughters,\*  
 whom they sacrificed to the idols  
 of Canaan, and the land was  
 polluted | with blood.  
 39 Thus they became unclean | by their acts,\*  
 and played the whore | in their deeds.  
 40 Then the anger of the LORD was kindled  
 against his | people,\*  
 and he abhorred his | heritage;  
 41 he gave them into the hand of the | nations,\*  
 so that those who hated them  
 ruled | over them.  
 42 Their enemies op- | pressed them,\*  
 and they were brought into subjection  
 un- | der their power.  
 43 Many times he de- | livered them,\*  
 but they were rebellious in their  
 purposes and were brought low  
 through their in- | iquity.

44 Nevertheless, he looked upon | their distress,\*  
 when he | heard their cry.  
 45 For their sake he remembered  
 his | covenant,\*  
 and relented according to the abundance  
 of his | steadfast love.  
 46 He caused them to be | pitied\*  
 by all those who held them | captive.  
 47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us  
 from among the | nations,\*  
 that we may give thanks to your holy  
 name and glory | in your praise.  
 48 Blessèd be the LORD, the God of Israel,  
 from everlasting to ever- | lasting!\*  
 And let all the people say,  
 "Amen!" | Praise the LORD!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 107

1 Oh give thanks to the LORD, for | he is good,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!  
 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD | say so,\*  
 whom he has redeemed from | trouble  
 3 and gathered in | from the lands,\*  
 from the east and from the west, from  
 the north and | from the south.  
 4 Some wandered in | desert wastes,\*  
 finding no way to a city to | dwell in;  
 5 hungry and | thirsty,\*  
 their soul fainted with- | in them.  
 6 Then they cried to the LORD  
 in their | trouble,\*  
 and he delivered them from | their  
 distress.  
 7 He led them by a | straight way\*  
 till they reached a city to | dwell in.

<sup>8</sup> Let them thank the LORD for his | steadfast  
love,\*  
for his wondrous works  
to the chil- | dren of men!

<sup>9</sup> For he satisfies the | longing soul,\*  
and the hungry soul he fills | with  
good things.

<sup>10</sup> Some sat in darkness and in the shad- | ow  
of death,\*  
prisoners in affliction | and in irons,  
<sup>11</sup> for they had rebelled against the | words  
of God,\*  
and spurned the counsel of the | Most  
High.

<sup>12</sup> So he bowed their hearts down  
with hard | labor;\*  
they fell down, with | none to help.

<sup>13</sup> Then they cried to the LORD  
in their | trouble,\*  
and he delivered them from | their distress.

<sup>14</sup> He brought them out of darkness and the  
shad- | ow of death,\*  
and burst their | bonds apart.

<sup>15</sup> Let them thank the LORD for his | steadfast  
love,\*  
for his wondrous works  
to the chil- | dren of men!

<sup>16</sup> For he shatters the | doors of bronze\*  
and cuts in two the | bars of iron.

<sup>17</sup> Some were fools through their | sinful ways,\*  
and because of their iniquities suffered  
af- | fliction;

<sup>18</sup> they loathed any | kind of food,\*  
and they drew near to the | gates of death.

<sup>19</sup> Then they cried to the LORD  
in their | trouble,\*  
and he delivered them from | their distress.

<sup>20</sup> He sent out his word and | healed them,\*  
and delivered them from their  
de- | struction.

<sup>21</sup> Let them thank the LORD  
for his | steadfast love,\*  
for his wondrous works  
to the chil- | dren of men!

<sup>22</sup> And let them offer sacrifices  
of thanks- | giving,\*  
and tell of his deeds in | songs of joy!

<sup>23</sup> Some went down to the | sea in ships,\*  
doing business on the great | waters;

<sup>24</sup> they saw the deeds | of the LORD,\*  
his wondrous works | in the deep.

<sup>25</sup> For he commanded and raised  
the | stormy wind,\*  
which lifted up the waves | of the sea.

<sup>26</sup> They mounted up to heaven;  
they went down | to the depths;\*  
their courage melted away  
in their | evil plight;

<sup>27</sup> they reeled and staggered like | drunken  
men\*  
and were at their | wits' end.

<sup>28</sup> Then they cried to the LORD  
in their | trouble,\*  
and he delivered them  
from | their distress.

<sup>29</sup> He made the | storm be still,\*  
and the waves of the | sea were hushed.

<sup>30</sup> Then they were glad that the waters  
were | quiet,\*  
and he brought them  
to their desired | haven.

<sup>31</sup> Let them thank the LORD  
for his | steadfast love,\*  
for his wondrous works  
to the chil- | dren of men!

<sup>32</sup> Let them extol him in the congregation  
of the | people,\*  
and praise him in the assembly  
of the | elders.

<sup>33</sup> He turns rivers into a | desert,\*  
 springs of water into | thirsty ground,  
<sup>34</sup> a fruitful land into a | salty waste,\*  
 because of the evil of its in- | habitants.  
<sup>35</sup> He turns a desert into pools of | water,\*  
 a parched land into springs of | water.  
<sup>36</sup> And there he lets the | hungry dwell,\*  
 and they establish a city to | live in;  
<sup>37</sup> they sow fields and plant | vineyards\*  
 and get a | fruitful yield.  
<sup>38</sup> By his blessing they multiply | greatly,\*  
 and he does not let their livestock  
 di- | minish.  
<sup>39</sup> When they are diminished  
 and | brought low\*  
 through oppression, evil, and | sorrow,  
<sup>40</sup> he pours contempt on | princes\*  
 and makes them wander  
 in | trackless wastes;  
<sup>41</sup> but he raises up the needy out  
 of af- | fliction\*  
 and makes their families | like flocks.  
<sup>42</sup> The upright see it | and are glad,\*  
 and all wickedness | shuts its mouth.  
<sup>43</sup> Whoever is wise, let him  
 attend | to these things;\*  
 let them consider the steadfast  
 love | of the LORD.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 108

<sup>1</sup> My heart is steadfast, | O God!\*  
 I will sing and make melody  
 with all my | being!  
<sup>2</sup> Awake, O | harp and lyre!\*  
 I will a- | wake the dawn!  
<sup>3</sup> I will give thanks to you, O LORD,  
 among the | peoples;\*  
 I will sing praises to you among  
 the | nations.  
<sup>4</sup> For your steadfast love is great  
 above the | heavens;\*  
 your faithfulness reaches | to the clouds.  
<sup>5</sup> Be exalted, O God, above the | heavens!\*  
 Let your glory be over | all the earth!  
<sup>6</sup> That your beloved ones may be de- | livered,\*  
 give salvation by your right hand  
 and | answer me!  
<sup>7</sup> God has promised in his | holiness.\*  
 “With exultation I will divide up  
 Shechem and portion out the Valley  
 of | Succoth.  
<sup>8</sup> Gilead is mine; Manasseh | is mine;\*  
 Ephraim is my helmet,  
 Judah my | scepter.  
<sup>9</sup> Moab is my washbasin;  
 upon Edom I | cast my shoe;\*  
 over Philistia I shout in | triumph.”  
<sup>10</sup> Who will bring me to the fortified | city?\*  
 Who will lead me to | Edom?  
<sup>11</sup> Have you not rejected us, | O God?\*  
 You do not go out, O God,  
 with our | armies.  
<sup>12</sup> Oh grant us help a- | gainst the foe,\*  
 for vain is the salva- | tion of man!  
<sup>13</sup> With God we shall do | valiantly;\*  
 it is he who will tread | down our foes.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

109

- <sup>1</sup> Be not silent, O God | of my praise!\*
- <sup>2</sup> For wicked and deceitful mouths are  
opened against me, speaking against  
me with | lying tongues.
- <sup>3</sup> They encircle me with | words of hate,\*  
and attack me | without cause.
- <sup>4</sup> In return for my love they ac- | cuse me,\*  
but I give my- | self to prayer.
- <sup>5</sup> So they reward me e- | vil for good,\*  
and hatred | for my love.
- <sup>6</sup> Appoint a wicked man a- | gainst him;\*,  
let an accuser stand at his | right hand.
- <sup>7</sup> When he is tried, let him come  
forth | guilty;\*,  
let his prayer be count- | ed as sin!
- <sup>8</sup> May his | days be few;\*,  
may another take his | office!
- <sup>9</sup> May his children be | fatherless\*  
and his wife a | widow!
- <sup>10</sup> May his children wander a- | bout  
and beg,\*  
seeking food far from the ruins  
they in- | habit!
- <sup>11</sup> May the creditor seize all | that he has;\*,  
may strangers plunder the fruits | of  
his toil!
- <sup>12</sup> Let there be none to extend kind- | ness  
to him,\*  
nor any to pity his fatherless | children!
- <sup>13</sup> May his posterity | be cut off;\*,  
may his name be blotted out  
in the second gener- | ation!
- <sup>14</sup> May the iniquity of his fathers be  
remembered be- | fore the LORD,\*  
and let not the sin of his mother  
be | blotted out!
- <sup>15</sup> Let them be before the LORD con- | tinually,\*  
that he may cut off the memory  
of them | from the earth!

- <sup>16</sup> For he did not remember  
to show | kindness,\*  
but pursued the poor and needy and the  
brokenhearted, to put | them to death.
- <sup>17</sup> He loved to curse; let curses  
come up- | on him!\*,  
He did not delight in blessing;  
may it be | far from him!
- <sup>18</sup> He clothed himself  
with cursing | as his coat;\*,  
may it soak into his body like water,  
like oil in- | to his bones!
- <sup>19</sup> May it be like a garment that he  
wraps a- | round him;\*,  
like a belt that he puts on | every day!
- <sup>20</sup> May this be the reward  
of my accusers | from the LORD,\*  
of those who speak evil a- | gainst my life!
- <sup>21</sup> But you, O GOD my Lord, deal on my  
behalf for your | name's sake;\*,  
because your steadfast love is good,  
de- | liver me!
- <sup>22</sup> For I am poor and | needy;\*,  
and my heart is stricken with- | in me.
- <sup>23</sup> I am gone like a shadow at | evening;\*,  
I am shaken off like a | locust.
- <sup>24</sup> My knees are weak through | fasting;\*,  
my body has become gaunt, | with no fat.
- <sup>25</sup> I am an object of scorn to my ac- | cusers;\*,  
when they see me, they | wag their heads.
- <sup>26</sup> Help me, O | LORD my God!\*,  
Save me according to your | steadfast love!
- <sup>27</sup> Let them know that this | is your hand;\*,  
you, O LORD, have | done it!
- <sup>28</sup> Let them curse, but | you will bless!\*,  
They arise and are put to shame, but your  
servant | will be glad!
- <sup>29</sup> May my accusers be clothed  
with dis- | honor;\*,  
may they be wrapped in their own shame  
as | in a cloak!

- <sup>30</sup> With my mouth I will give great thanks | to the LORD;\*  
I will praise him in the midst | of the throng.
- <sup>31</sup> For he stands at the right hand of the | needy,\*  
to save him from those who condemn his | soul to death.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 110

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD says to my Lord:  
“Sit at my | right hand,\*  
until I make your enemies  
your | footstool.”
- <sup>2</sup> The LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty | scepter.\*  
Rule in the midst of your | enemies!
- <sup>3</sup> Your people will offer themselves freely on  
the day of your power, in holy | garments;\*  
from the womb of the morning,  
the dew of your youth | will be yours.
- <sup>4</sup> The LORD has sworn and will not | change his mind,\*  
“You are a priest forever after  
the order of Mel- | chizedek.”
- <sup>5</sup> The Lord is at your | right hand,\*  
he will shatter kings on the day | of his wrath.
- <sup>6</sup> He will execute judgment among the  
nations, filling them with | corpses;\*  
he will shatter chiefs over the | wide earth.
- <sup>7</sup> He will drink from the brook | by the way,\*  
therefore he will lift | up his head.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 111

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! I will give thanks  
to the LORD with my | whole heart,\*  
in the company of the upright,  
in the congre- | gation.
- <sup>2</sup> Great are the works | of the LORD,\*  
studied by all who de- | light in them.
- <sup>3</sup> Full of splendor and majesty | is his work,\*  
and his righteousness endures for- | ever.
- <sup>4</sup> He has caused his wondrous works  
to be re- | membered,\*  
the LORD is gracious and | merciful.
- <sup>5</sup> He provides food for those who | fear him;\*  
he remembers his covenant for- | ever.
- <sup>6</sup> He has shown his people the power | of his works,\*  
in giving them the inheritance  
of the | nations.
- <sup>7</sup> The works of his hands are faith- | ful and just;\*  
all his precepts are | trustworthy;
- <sup>8</sup> they are established forever and | ever,\*  
to be performed with faithfulness  
and up- | rightness.
- <sup>9</sup> He sent redemption to his people; he has  
commanded his covenant for- | ever.\*  
Holy and awesome | is his name!
- <sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning  
of wisdom; all those who practice it have  
a good under- | standing.\*  
His praise endures for- | ever!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 112

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man  
who | fears the LORD,\*  
who greatly delights  
in his com- | mandments!

- <sup>2</sup> His offspring will be mighty | in the land;\*  
the generation of the upright | will be  
blessed.
- <sup>3</sup> Wealth and riches are | in his house,\*  
and his righteousness endures for- | ever.
- <sup>4</sup> Light dawns in the darkness  
for the | upright;\*  
he is gracious, merciful, and | righteous.
- <sup>5</sup> It is well with the man who deals  
generous- | ly and lends;\*  
who conducts his affairs with | justice.
- <sup>6</sup> For the righteous will nev- | er be moved;\*  
he will be remembered for- | ever.
- <sup>7</sup> He is not afraid of | bad news;\*  
his heart is firm, trusting | in the LORD.
- <sup>8</sup> His heart is steady; he will not | be afraid,\*  
until he looks in triumph  
on his adver- | saries.
- <sup>9</sup> He has distributed freely; he has given to the  
poor; his righteousness endures for- | ever;\*  
his horn is exalted in | honor.
- <sup>10</sup> The wicked man sees it and is angry;  
he gnashes his teeth and | melts away;\*  
the desire of the wicked will | perish!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 113

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants | of  
the LORD,\*  
praise the name | of the LORD!
- <sup>2</sup> Blessed be the name | of the LORD\*  
from this time forth and for- | evermore!
- <sup>3</sup> From the rising of the sun to its | setting,\*  
the name of the LORD is | to be praised!
- <sup>4</sup> The LORD is high above all | nations,\*  
and his glory above the | heavens!
- <sup>5</sup> Who is like the | LORD our God,\*  
who is seated | on high,

- <sup>6</sup> who looks | far down\*  
on the heavens | and the earth?
- <sup>7</sup> He raises the poor | from the dust\*  
and lifts the needy from the | ash heap,
- <sup>8</sup> to make them sit with | princes,\*  
with the princes of his | people.
- <sup>9</sup> He gives the barren wom- | an a home,\*  
making her the joyous mother  
of children. | Praise the LORD!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 114

- <sup>1</sup> When Israel went out from | Egypt,\*  
the house of Jacob from a people of  
strange | language,
- <sup>2</sup> Judah became his sanctu- | ary,\*  
Israel his do- | minion.
- <sup>3</sup> The sea | looked and fled;\*  
Jordan | turned back.
- <sup>4</sup> The mountains | skipped like rams,\*  
the | hills like lambs.
- <sup>5</sup> What ails you, O sea, | that you flee?\*
- O Jordan, that you | turn back?
- <sup>6</sup> O mountains, that you | skip like rams?\*
- O | hills, like lambs?
- <sup>7</sup> Tremble, O earth, at the presence | of the  
Lord,\*  
at the presence of the God of | Jacob,
- <sup>8</sup> who turns the rock into a pool of | water,\*  
the flint into a spring of | water.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 115

- <sup>1</sup> Not to us, O LORD, not to us,  
but to your name give | glory,\*  
for the sake of your steadfast love  
and your | faithfulness!
- <sup>2</sup> Why should the | nations say,\*  
“Where | is their God?”
- <sup>3</sup> Our God is in the | heavens;\*  
he does all that he | pleases.
- <sup>4</sup> Their idols are sil- | ver and gold,\*  
the work of | human hands.
- <sup>5</sup> They have mouths, but | do not speak;\*  
eyes, but | do not see.
- <sup>6</sup> They have ears, but | do not hear;\*  
noses, but | do not smell.
- <sup>7</sup> They have hands, but do not feel;  
feet, but | do not walk,\*  
and they do not make a sound | in  
their throat.
- <sup>8</sup> Those who make them be- | come like them;\*  
so do all who | trust in them.
- <sup>9</sup> O Israel, trust | in the LORD!\*  
He is their help | and their shield.
- <sup>10</sup> O house of Aaron, trust | in the LORD!\*  
He is their help | and their shield.
- <sup>11</sup> You who fear the LORD, trust | in the LORD!\*  
He is their help | and their shield.
- <sup>12</sup> The LORD has remembered us;  
he will | bless us;\*  
he will bless the house of Israel;  
he will bless the house of | Aaron;
- <sup>13</sup> he will bless those who | fear the LORD,\*  
both the small | and the great.
- <sup>14</sup> May the LORD give you | increase,\*  
you and your | children!
- <sup>15</sup> May you be blessed | by the LORD,\*  
who made | heaven and earth!
- <sup>16</sup> The heavens are the LORD’s | heavens,\*  
but the earth he has given to the  
chil- | dren of man.

- <sup>17</sup> The dead do not | praise the LORD,\*  
nor do any who go down into | silence.
- <sup>18</sup> But we will | bless the LORD\*  
from this time forth and  
forevermore. | Praise the LORD!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 116

- <sup>1</sup> I love the LORD, because | he has heard\*  
my voice and my pleas for | mercy.
- <sup>2</sup> Because he inclined his | ear to me,\*  
therefore I will call on him as long | as  
I live.
- <sup>3</sup> The snares of death encompassed me;  
the pangs of Sheol laid | hold on me;\*  
I suffered distress and | anguish.
- <sup>4</sup> Then I called on the name | of the LORD:\*  
“O LORD, I pray, deliv- | er my soul!”
- <sup>5</sup> Gracious is the LORD, and | righteous,\*  
our God is | merciful.
- <sup>6</sup> The LORD preserves the | simple,\*  
when I was brought low, he | saved me.
- <sup>7</sup> Return, O my soul, | to your rest;\*  
for the LORD has dealt bountifully | with  
you.
- <sup>8</sup> For you have delivered my | soul from death,\*  
my eyes from tears, my feet  
from | stumbling;
- <sup>9</sup> I will walk be- | fore the LORD\*  
in the land of the | living.
- <sup>10</sup> I believed, even | when I spoke,\*  
“I am greatly af- | flicted”;
- <sup>11</sup> I said in | my alarm,\*  
“All mankind are | liars.”
- <sup>12</sup> What shall I render | to the LORD\*  
for all his bene- | fits to me?
- <sup>13</sup> I will lift up the cup of sal- | vation\*  
and call on the name | of the LORD,

- <sup>14</sup> I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
in the presence of all his | people.
- <sup>15</sup> Precious in the sight | of the LORD\*  
is the death | of his saints.
- <sup>16</sup> O LORD, I am your | servant;\*  
I am your servant, the son of your  
maidservant. You have | loosed  
my bonds.
- <sup>17</sup> I will offer to you the sacrifice  
of thanks- | giving\*  
and call on the name | of the LORD.
- <sup>18</sup> I will pay my vows | to the LORD\*  
in the presence of all his | people,  
<sup>19</sup> in the courts of the house | of the LORD,\*  
in your midst, O Jerusalem. | Praise  
the LORD!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 117

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD, all | nations!\*  
Extol him, all | peoples!
- <sup>2</sup> For great is his steadfast | love toward us,\*  
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures  
forever. | Praise the LORD!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 118

- <sup>1</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD, for | he is good;\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!
- <sup>2</sup> Let | Israel say,\*  
“His steadfast love endures for- | ever.”
- <sup>3</sup> Let the house of | Aaron say,\*  
“His steadfast love endures for- | ever.”
- <sup>4</sup> Let those who fear the | LORD say,\*  
“His steadfast love endures for- | ever.”

- <sup>5</sup> Out of my distress I called | on the LORD;\*  
the LORD answered me and | set me free.
- <sup>6</sup> The LORD is on my side; I | will not fear.\*  
What can man | do to me?
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD is on my side as my | helper;\*  
I shall look in triumph on those  
who | hate me.
- <sup>8</sup> It is better to take refuge | in the LORD\*  
than to | trust in man.
- <sup>9</sup> It is better to take refuge | in the LORD\*  
than to trust in | princes.
- <sup>10</sup> All nations sur- | rounded me;\*  
in the name of the LORD I | cut them off!
- <sup>11</sup> They surrounded me,  
surrounded me on | every side,\*  
in the name of the LORD I | cut them off!
- <sup>12</sup> They surrounded me like bees; they went  
out like a fire a- | mong thorns,\*  
in the name of the LORD I | cut them off!
- <sup>13</sup> I was pushed hard, so that I was | falling,\*  
but the LORD | helped me.
- <sup>14</sup> The LORD is my strength | and my song;\*  
he has become my sal- | vation.
- <sup>15</sup> Glad songs of salvation are in the tents  
of the | righteous:\*  
“The right hand of the LORD  
does | valiantly,  
<sup>16</sup> the right hand of the | LORD exalts,\*  
the right hand of the LORD  
does | valiantly!”
- <sup>17</sup> I shall not die, but | I shall live,\*  
and recount the deeds | of the LORD.
- <sup>18</sup> The LORD has disciplined me se- | verely,\*  
but he has not given me o- | ver to death.
- <sup>19</sup> Open to me the gates of | righteousness,\*  
that I may enter through them and give  
thanks | to the LORD.
- <sup>20</sup> This is the gate | of the LORD;\*  
the righteous shall enter | through it.
- <sup>21</sup> I thank you that you have | answered me\*  
and have become my sal- | vation.

- 22 The stone that the builders re- | jected\*  
has become the | cornerstone.
- 23 This is the LORD's | doing;\*  
it is marvelous | in our eyes.
- 24 This is the day that the | LORD has made;\*  
let us rejoice and be | glad in it.
- 25 Save us, we pray, | O LORD!\*  
O LORD, we pray, give | us success!
- 26 Blessèd is he who comes in the name | of  
the LORD!\*
- We bless you from the house | of the LORD.
- 27 The LORD is God, and he has made his  
light to shine up- | on us.\*  
Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,  
up to the horns of the | altar!
- 28 You are my God, and I will give | thanks  
to you,\*  
you are my God; I will ex- | tol you.
- 29 Oh give thanks to the LORD, for | he is good;\*  
for his steadfast love endures for- | ever!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 119

## ALEPH

- 1 Blessèd are those whose way is | blameless,\*  
who walk in the law | of the LORD!
- 2 Blessèd are those who keep  
his testi- | monies,\*  
who seek him with their | whole heart,  
3 who also | do no wrong,\*  
but walk | in his ways!
- 4 You have commanded your | precepts\*  
to be kept dil- | igently.
- 5 Oh that my ways may be | steadfast\*  
in keeping your | statutes!
- 6 Then I shall not be | put to shame,\*  
having my eyes fixed on  
all your com- | mandments.

- 7 I will praise you with an | upright heart,\*  
when I learn your just and righ- | teous  
decrees.
- 8 I will keep your | statutes;\*  
do not utterly for- | sake me!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## BETH

- 9 How can a young man keep his | way pure?\*
- By guarding it according | to your word.
- 10 With my whole heart I | seek you,\*  
let me not wander from your  
com- | mandments!
- 11 I have stored up your word | in my heart,\*  
that I might not sin a- | gainst you.
- 12 Blessèd are you, | O LORD;\*  
teach me your | statutes!
- 13 With my lips | I declare\*  
all the just decrees | of your mouth.
- 14 In the way of your testimonies | I delight\*  
as much as in all | riches.
- 15 I will meditate on your | precepts\*  
and fix my eyes | on your ways.
- 16 I will delight in your | statutes;\*  
I will not for- | get your word.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## GIMEL

- 17 Deal bountifully with your | servant,\*  
that I may live and | keep your word.
- 18 Open my eyes, that I | may behold\*  
wondrous things out | of your law.
- 19 I am a sojourner | on the earth;\*  
hide not your command- | ments from me!
- 20 My soul is consumed with | longing\*  
for your just decrees at | all times.

<sup>21</sup> You rebuke the insolent, ac- | cursèd ones,\*  
 who wander from your com- | mandments.  
<sup>22</sup> Take away from me scorn | and contempt,\*  
 for I have kept your testi- | monies.  
<sup>23</sup> Even though princes sit plotting a- | gainst  
 me,\*  
 your servant will meditate  
 on your | statutes.  
<sup>24</sup> Your testimonies are | my delight,\*  
 they are my | counselors.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

DALETH

<sup>25</sup> My soul clings | to the dust;\*  
 give me life according | to your word!  
<sup>26</sup> When I told of my ways, you | answered me,\*  
 teach me your | statutes!  
<sup>27</sup> Make me understand the way  
 of your | precepts,\*  
 and I will meditate on your | wondrous  
 works.  
<sup>28</sup> My soul melts away for | sorrow;\*  
 strengthen me according | to your word!  
<sup>29</sup> Put false ways | far from me\*  
 and graciously teach | me your law!  
<sup>30</sup> I have chosen the way of | faithfulness;\*  
 I set your just decrees be- | fore me.  
<sup>31</sup> I cling to your testimonies, | O LORD;\*  
 let me not be | put to shame!  
<sup>32</sup> I will run in the way  
 of your com- | mandments\*  
 when you en- | large my heart!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

HE

<sup>33</sup> Teach me, O LORD, the way of your | statutes;\*  
 and I will keep it | to the end.  
<sup>34</sup> Give me understanding, that I may | keep  
 your law\*  
 and observe it with my | whole heart.  
<sup>35</sup> Lead me in the path  
 of your com- | mandments,\*  
 for I de- | light in it.  
<sup>36</sup> Incline my heart to your testi- | monies,\*  
 and not to | selfish gain!  
<sup>37</sup> Turn my eyes from looking  
 at | worthless things;\*  
 and give me life | in your ways.  
<sup>38</sup> Confirm to your servant your | promise,\*  
 that you | may be feared.  
<sup>39</sup> Turn away the reproach | that I dread,\*  
 for your just de- | crees are good.  
<sup>40</sup> Behold, I long for your | precepts,\*  
 in your righteousness | give me life!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

WAW

<sup>41</sup> Let your steadfast love come to me, | O  
 LORD,\*  
 your salvation according  
 to your | promise;  
<sup>42</sup> then shall I have an answer  
 for him who | taunts me,\*  
 for I trust | in your word.  
<sup>43</sup> And take not the word of truth  
 utterly out | of my mouth,\*  
 for my hope is in your | just decrees.  
<sup>44</sup> I will keep your law con- | tinually,\*  
 forever and | ever,  
<sup>45</sup> and I shall walk in a | wide place,\*  
 for I have sought your | precepts.

<sup>46</sup> I will also speak of your testimonies  
 be- | fore kings\*  
 and shall not be | put to shame,  
<sup>47</sup> for I find my delight in your  
 com- | mandments,\*  
 which | I love.  
<sup>48</sup> I will lift up my hands toward your  
 commandments, | which I love,\*  
 and I will meditate on your | statutes.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## ZAYIN

<sup>49</sup> Remember your word to your | servant,\*  
 in which you have | made me hope.  
<sup>50</sup> This is my comfort in my af- | fliction,\*  
 that your promise | gives me life.  
<sup>51</sup> The insolent utterly de- | ride me,\*  
 but I do not turn away | from your law.  
<sup>52</sup> When I think of your just decrees | from  
 of old,\*  
 I take comfort, | O LORD.  
<sup>53</sup> Hot indignation seizes me because  
 of the | wicked,\*  
 who for- | sake your law.  
<sup>54</sup> Your statutes have | been my songs\*  
 in the house of my | sojourning.  
<sup>55</sup> I remember your name in the night, | O  
 LORD,\*  
 and | keep your law.  
<sup>56</sup> This blessing has fal- | len to me,\*  
 that I have kept your | precepts.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## HETH

<sup>57</sup> The LORD is my | portion,\*  
 I promise to | keep your words.

<sup>58</sup> I entreat your favor with | all my heart,\*  
 be gracious to me according  
 to your | promise.  
<sup>59</sup> When I think | on my ways,\*  
 I turn my feet to your testi- | monies;  
<sup>60</sup> I hasten and do | not delay\*  
 to keep your com- | mandments.  
<sup>61</sup> Though the cords of the wicked en- | snare me,\*  
 I do not for- | get your law.  
<sup>62</sup> At midnight I rise to | praise you,\*  
 because of your just and righ- | teous  
 decrees.  
<sup>63</sup> I am a companion of all who | fear you,\*  
 of those who keep your | precepts.  
<sup>64</sup> The earth, O LORD, is full  
 of your | steadfast love;\*  
 teach me your | statutes!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## TETH

<sup>65</sup> You have dealt well with your | servant,\*  
 O LORD, according | to your word.  
<sup>66</sup> Teach me good judgment and | knowledge,\*  
 for I believe in your com- | mandments.  
<sup>67</sup> Before I was afflicted I | went astray,\*  
 but now I | keep your word.  
<sup>68</sup> You are good and | do good,\*  
 teach me your | statutes.  
<sup>69</sup> The insolent smear | me with lies,\*  
 but with my whole heart I keep  
 your | precepts;  
<sup>70</sup> their heart is unfeeling | like fat,\*  
 but I delight | in your law.  
<sup>71</sup> It is good for me that I was af- | flicted,\*  
 that I might learn your | statutes.  
<sup>72</sup> The law of your mouth is bet- | ter to me\*  
 than thousands of gold and silver | pieces.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**

**as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**YODH**

<sup>73</sup>Your hands have made and | fashioned me;\*  
give me understanding that I may learn  
your com- | mandments.

<sup>74</sup>Those who fear you shall see me | and  
rejoice,\*  
because I have hoped | in your word.

<sup>75</sup>I know, O LORD, that your just decrees  
are | righteous,\*  
and that in faithfulness you  
have af- | flicted me.

<sup>76</sup>Let your steadfast love | comfort me\*  
according to your promise  
to your | servant.

<sup>77</sup>Let your mercy come to me, that | I may  
live;\*  
for your law is | my delight.

<sup>78</sup>Let the insolent be put to shame, because  
they have wronged me with | falsehood;\*  
as for me, I will meditate  
on your | precepts.

<sup>79</sup>Let those who fear you | turn to me,\*  
that they may know your testi- | monies.

<sup>80</sup>May my heart be blameless in  
your | statutes,\*  
that I may not be | put to shame!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**KAPH**

<sup>81</sup>My soul longs for your sal- | vation;\*  
I hope | in your word.

<sup>82</sup>My eyes long for your | promise;\*  
I ask, "When will you | comfort me?"

<sup>83</sup>For I have become like a wineskin | in  
the smoke,\*  
yet I have not forgotten your | statutes.

<sup>84</sup>How long must your ser- | vant endure?\*

When will you judge those  
who perse- | cute me?

<sup>85</sup>The insolent have dug pit- | falls for me;\*  
they do not live according | to your law.

<sup>86</sup>All your command- | ments are sure;\*  
they persecute me with falsehood; | help  
me!

<sup>87</sup>They have almost made an end  
of me | on earth,\*  
but I have not forsaken your | precepts.

<sup>88</sup>In your steadfast love | give me life,\*  
that I may keep the testimonies | of  
your mouth.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**LAMEDH**

<sup>89</sup>Forever, | O LORD,\*  
your word is firmly fixed in the | heavens.

<sup>90</sup>Your faithfulness endures  
to all gener- | ations;\*  
you have established the earth,  
and it | stands fast.

<sup>91</sup>By your appointment they | stand this day,\*  
for all things are your | servants.

<sup>92</sup>If your law had not been | my delight,\*  
I would have perished in my af- | fliction.

<sup>93</sup>I will never forget your | precepts,\*  
for by them you have giv- | en me life.

<sup>94</sup>I am yours; | save me,\*  
for I have sought your | precepts.

<sup>95</sup>The wicked lie in wait to de- | stroy me,\*  
but I consider your testi- | monies.

<sup>96</sup>I have seen a limit to all per- | fection,\*  
but your commandment  
is exceed- | ingly broad.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## MEM

- <sup>97</sup> Oh how I | love your law!\*  
It is my meditation | all the day.
- <sup>98</sup> Your commandment makes me wiser than  
my | enemies,\*  
for it is ever | with me.
- <sup>99</sup> I have more understanding  
than all my | teachers,\*  
for your testimonies  
are my medi- | tation.
- <sup>100</sup> I understand more than the | agèd,\*  
for I keep your | precepts.
- <sup>101</sup> I hold back my feet from every | evil way,\*  
in order to | keep your word.
- <sup>102</sup> I do not turn aside from your | just decrees,\*  
for you have | taught me.
- <sup>103</sup> How sweet are your words | to my taste,\*  
sweeter than honey | to my mouth!
- <sup>104</sup> Through your precepts I get  
under- | standing,\*  
therefore I hate every | false way.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## NUN

- <sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp | to my feet\*  
and a light | to my path.
- <sup>106</sup> I have sworn an oath and con- | firmed it,\*  
to keep your just and righ- | teous decrees.
- <sup>107</sup> I am severely af- | flicted,\*  
give me life, O LORD, according | to  
your word!
- <sup>108</sup> Accept my freewill offerings of praise, | O  
LORD,\*  
and teach me your | just decrees.
- <sup>109</sup> I hold my life in my hand con- | tinually,\*  
but I do not for- | get your law.
- <sup>110</sup> The wicked have laid a | snare for me,\*  
but I do not stray from your | precepts.

- <sup>111</sup> Your testimonies are my heritage  
for- | ever,\*  
for they are the joy | of my heart.
- <sup>112</sup> I incline my heart to perform your | statutes\*  
forever, | to the end.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## SAMEKH

- <sup>113</sup> I hate the double- | minded,\*  
but I | love your law.
- <sup>114</sup> You are my hiding place | and my shield;\*  
I hope | in your word.
- <sup>115</sup> Depart from me, you evil- | doers,\*  
that I may keep the commandments | of  
my God.
- <sup>116</sup> Uphold me according to your promise,  
that | I may live,\*  
and let me not be put to shame | in  
my hope!
- <sup>117</sup> Hold me up, that I | may be safe\*  
and have regard for your statutes  
con- | tinually!
- <sup>118</sup> You spurn all who go astray from  
your | statutes,\*  
for their cunning | is in vain.
- <sup>119</sup> All the wicked of the earth you dis- | card  
like dross,\*  
therefore I love your testi- | monies.
- <sup>120</sup> My flesh trembles for | fear of you,\*  
and I am afraid of your | judgments.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## AYIN

- <sup>121</sup> I have done what is | just and right;\*  
do not leave me to my op- | pressors.
- <sup>122</sup> Give your servant a | pledge of good,\*  
let not the insolent op- | press me.

- <sup>123</sup> My eyes long for your sal- | vation\*  
and for the fulfillment  
of your righteous | promise.
- <sup>124</sup> Deal with your servant according  
to your | steadfast love,\*  
and teach me your | statutes.
- <sup>125</sup> I am your servant; give me  
under- | standing,\*  
that I may know your testi- | monies!
- <sup>126</sup> It is time for the | LORD to act,\*  
for your law has been | broken.
- <sup>127</sup> Therefore I love your com- | mandments\*  
above gold, above | fine gold.
- <sup>128</sup> Therefore I consider all your precepts | to  
be right;\*  
I hate every | false way.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**
- PE**
- <sup>129</sup> Your testimonies are | wonderful,\*  
therefore my soul | keeps them.
- <sup>130</sup> The unfolding of your | words gives light;\*  
it imparts understanding to the | simple.
- <sup>131</sup> I open my | mouth and pant,\*  
because I long for your com- | mandments.
- <sup>132</sup> Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me,\*  
as is your way with those who | love  
your name.
- <sup>133</sup> Keep steady my steps according  
to your | promise,\*  
and let no iniquity get dominion | over me.
- <sup>134</sup> Redeem me from man's op- | pression,\*  
that I may keep your | precepts.

- <sup>135</sup> Make your face shine upon your |  
servant,\*  
and teach me your | statutes.
- <sup>136</sup> My eyes shed | streams of tears,\*  
because people do not | keep your law.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**TSADHE**

- <sup>137</sup> Righteous are you, | O LORD,\*  
and right are your | just decrees.
- <sup>138</sup> You have appointed your testimonies  
in | righteousness\*  
and in all | faithfulness.
- <sup>139</sup> My zeal con- | sumes me,\*  
because my foes for- | get your words.
- <sup>140</sup> Your promise is | well tried,\*  
and your servant | loves it.
- <sup>141</sup> I am small | and despised,\*  
yet I do not forget your | precepts.
- <sup>142</sup> Your righteousness is righteous for- | ever,\*  
and your | law is true.
- <sup>143</sup> Trouble and anguish have | found me out,\*  
but your commandments are | my  
delight.
- <sup>144</sup> Your testimonies are righteous for- | ever;\*  
give me understanding that | I may live.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**QOPH**

- <sup>145</sup> With my whole heart I cry; answer me, | O  
LORD!\*
- I will keep your | statutes.
- <sup>146</sup> I call to you; | save me,\*  
that I may observe your testi- | monies.
- <sup>147</sup> I rise before dawn and | cry for help;\*  
I hope | in your words.

<sup>148</sup>My eyes are awake before the watches | of  
the night,\*  
that I may meditate on your | promise.

<sup>149</sup>Hear my voice according  
to your | steadfast love;\*

O LORD, according to your justice | give  
me life.

<sup>150</sup>They draw near who persecute me with  
evil | purpose;\*

they are far | from your law.

<sup>151</sup>But you are near, | O LORD,\*  
and all your command- | ments are true.

<sup>152</sup>Long have I known from your  
testi- | monies\*  
that you have founded them for- | ever.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## RESH

<sup>153</sup>Look on my affliction and de- | liver me,\*  
for I do not for- | get your law.

<sup>154</sup>Plead my cause and re- | deem me;\*

give me life according to your | promise!

<sup>155</sup>Salvation is far from the | wicked,\*  
for they do not seek your | statutes.

<sup>156</sup>Great is your mercy, | O LORD;\*

give me life according to your | just decrees.

<sup>157</sup>Many are my persecutors and my  
adver- | saries,\*  
but I do not swerve from your  
testi- | monies.

<sup>158</sup>I look at the faithless | with disgust,\*  
because they do not keep | your  
commands.

<sup>159</sup>Consider how I love your | precepts!\*

Give me life according  
to your | steadfast love.

<sup>160</sup>The sum of your | word is truth,\*  
and every one of your just and righteous  
decrees endures for- | ever.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## SIN AND SHIN

<sup>161</sup>Princes persecute me with- | out cause,\*  
but my heart stands in awe | of your  
words.

<sup>162</sup>I rejoice | at your word\*  
like one who | finds great spoil.

<sup>163</sup>I hate and abhor | falsehood,\*  
but I | love your law.

<sup>164</sup>Seven times a day I | praise you\*  
for your just and high- | teous decrees.

<sup>165</sup>Great peace have those who | love your law;\*  
nothing can make them | stumble.

<sup>166</sup>I hope for your salvation, | O LORD,\*  
and I do your com- | mandments.

<sup>167</sup>My soul keeps your testi- | monies;\*  
I love them ex- | ceedingly.

<sup>168</sup>I keep your precepts and testi- | monies,\*  
for all my ways are be- | fore you.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## TAW

<sup>169</sup>Let my cry come before you, | O LORD;\*  
give me understanding according | to  
your word!

<sup>170</sup>Let my plea come be- | fore you;\*

deliver me according | to your word.

<sup>171</sup>My lips will | pour forth praise,\*  
for you teach me your | statutes.

<sup>172</sup>My tongue will sing | of your word,\*  
for all your command- | ments are right.

<sup>173</sup>Let your hand be ready to | help me,\*  
for I have chosen your | precepts.

<sup>174</sup>I long for your salvation, | O LORD,\*  
and your law is | my delight.

<sup>175</sup> Let my soul live and | praise you,\*  
and let your just decrees | help me.  
<sup>176</sup> I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek  
your | servant,\*  
for I do not forget your  
com- | mandments.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 120

<sup>1</sup> In my distress I called | to the LORD,\*  
and he | answered me.  
<sup>2</sup> Deliver me, O LORD, from | lying lips,\*  
from a de- | ceitful tongue.  
<sup>3</sup> What shall be given to you, and what more  
shall be | done to you,\*  
you de- | ceitful tongue?  
<sup>4</sup> A warrior's sharp | arrows,\*  
with glowing coals of the | broom tree!  
<sup>5</sup> Woe to me, that I sojourn in | Meshech,\*  
that I dwell among the tents of | Kedar!  
<sup>6</sup> Too long have I had my | dwelling\*  
among those who | hate peace.  
<sup>7</sup> I | am for peace,\*  
but when I speak, they | are for war!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 121

<sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes | to the hills.\*  
From where does my | help come?  
<sup>2</sup> My help comes | from the LORD,\*  
who made | heaven and earth.  
<sup>3</sup> He will not let your | foot be moved,\*  
he who keeps you will not | slumber.  
<sup>4</sup> Behold, he who keeps | Israel\*  
will neither slum- | ber nor sleep.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD is your | keeper;\*  
the LORD is your shade  
on your | right hand.  
<sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike | you by day,\*  
nor the | moon by night.  
<sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all | evil;\*  
he will | keep your life.  
<sup>8</sup> The LORD will keep your going out and  
your | coming in\*  
from this time forth and for- | evermore.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 122

<sup>1</sup> I was glad when they | said to me,\*  
“Let us go to the house | of the LORD!”  
<sup>2</sup> Our feet have been | standing\*  
within your gates, O Je- | rusalem!  
<sup>3</sup> Jerusalem—built as a | city\*  
that is bound firmly to- | gether,  
<sup>4</sup> to which the tribes go up, the tribes  
of the LORD, as was decreed for | Israel,\*  
to give thanks to the name | of the LORD.  
<sup>5</sup> There thrones for judg- | ment were set,\*  
the thrones of the house of | David.  
<sup>6</sup> Pray for the peace of Je- | rusalem!\*  
“May they be secure who | love you!  
<sup>7</sup> Peace be with- | in your walls\*  
and security within your | towers!”  
<sup>8</sup> For my brothers and com- | panions' sake\*  
I will say, “Peace be with- | in you!”  
<sup>9</sup> For the sake of the house of the | LORD  
our God,\*  
I will | seek your good.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 123

- <sup>1</sup> To you I lift | up my eyes,\*  
O you who are enthroned in the | heavens!
- <sup>2</sup> Behold, as the eyes of servants look to  
the hand of their master, as the eyes of a  
maidservant to the hand of her | mistress,\*  
so our eyes look to the LORD our God,  
till he has mercy up- | on us.
- <sup>3</sup> Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy  
up- | on us,\*  
for we have had more than enough | of  
contempt.
- <sup>4</sup> Our soul has had more than enough of the  
scorn of those who | are at ease,\*  
of the contempt | of the proud.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 124

- <sup>1</sup> If it had not been the LORD  
who was | on our side—\*  
let Israel | now say—
- <sup>2</sup> if it had not been the LORD  
who was | on our side\*  
when people rose up a- | gainst us,
- <sup>3</sup> then they would have swallowed  
us | up alive,\*  
when their anger was kindled a- | gainst us;
- <sup>4</sup> then the flood would have swept | us away,\*  
the torrent would have gone | over us;
- <sup>5</sup> then over us | would have gone\*  
the raging | waters.
- <sup>6</sup> Blessed | be the LORD,\*  
who has not given us  
as prey | to their teeth!
- <sup>7</sup> We have escaped like a bird from the snare  
of the | fowlers;\*  
the snare is broken,  
and we | have escaped!

- <sup>8</sup> Our help is in the name | of the LORD,\*  
who made | heaven and earth.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 125

- <sup>1</sup> Those who trust in the LORD are like  
Mount | Zion,\*  
which cannot be moved,  
but abides for- | ever.
- <sup>2</sup> As the mountains surround Jerusalem,  
so the LORD surrounds his | people,\*  
from this time forth and for- | evermore.
- <sup>3</sup> For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest  
on the land allotted to the | righteous,\*  
lest the righteous stretch out their hands  
to | do wrong.
- <sup>4</sup> Do good, O LORD, to those | who are good,\*  
and to those who are upright | in their  
hearts!
- <sup>5</sup> But those who turn aside to their crooked  
ways the LORD will lead away  
with evil- | doers!\*  
Peace be upon | Israel!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 126

- <sup>1</sup> When the LORD restored the fortunes  
of | Zion,\*  
we were like | those who dream.
- <sup>2</sup> Then our mouth was filled with | laughter,\*  
and our tongue with | shouts of joy;  
then they said among the nations, “The  
LORD has done great | things for them.”\*  
<sup>3</sup> The LORD has done great things  
for us; | we are glad.

- <sup>4</sup> Restore our fortunes, | O LORD,\*  
like streams in the | Negeb!
- <sup>5</sup> Those who | sow in tears\*  
shall reap with | shouts of joy!
- <sup>6</sup> He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed  
for | sowing,\*  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
bringing his | sheaves with him.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 127

- <sup>1</sup> Unless the LORD builds the house, those  
who build it la- | bor in vain.\*  
Unless the LORD watches over the city,  
the watchman stays a- | wake in vain.
- <sup>2</sup> It is in vain that you rise up early and go  
late to rest, eating the bread of | anxious toil,\*  
for he gives to his be- | loved sleep.
- <sup>3</sup> Behold, children are a heritage | from  
the LORD,\*  
the fruit of the womb | a reward.
- <sup>4</sup> Like arrows in the hand of a | warrior\*  
are the children | of one's youth.
- <sup>5</sup> Blessed is the man who fills  
his quiver | with them!\*
- He shall not be put to shame when he  
speaks with his enemies | in the gate.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 128

- <sup>1</sup> Blessed is everyone who | fears the LORD,\*  
who walks | in his ways!
- <sup>2</sup> You shall eat the fruit of the labor | of your  
hands,\*  
you shall be blessed, and it shall be | well  
with you.

- <sup>3</sup> Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
with- | in your house,\*  
your children will be like olive shoots  
around your | table.
- <sup>4</sup> Behold, thus shall the | man be blessed\*  
who | fears the LORD.
- <sup>5</sup> The LORD bless you from | Zion!\*
- May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days | of your life!
- <sup>6</sup> May you see your children's | children!\*
- Peace be upon | Israel!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 129

- <sup>1</sup> "Greatly have they afflicted me | from  
my youth"—\*  
let Israel | now say—
- <sup>2</sup> "Greatly have they afflicted me | from  
my youth,\*  
yet they have not prevailed a- | gainst me.
- <sup>3</sup> The plowers plowed up- | on my back,\*  
they made long their | furrows."
- <sup>4</sup> The LORD is | righteous;\*  
he has cut the cords of the | wicked.
- <sup>5</sup> May all who hate | Zion\*  
be put to shame and turned | backward!
- <sup>6</sup> Let them be like the grass on the | housetops,\*  
which withers before it | grows up,  
<sup>7</sup> with which the reaper does not | fill  
his hand\*  
nor the binder of | sheaves his arms,  
<sup>8</sup> nor do those who pass by say, "The blessing  
of the LORD be up- | on you!\*"   
We bless you in the name | of the LORD!"
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 130

- <sup>1</sup> Out | of the depths\*  
I cry to you, | O LORD!
- <sup>2</sup> O Lord, | hear my voice!\*  
Let your ears be attentive to the voice of  
my pleas for | mercy!
- <sup>3</sup> If you, O LORD, should mark in- | iquities,\*  
O Lord, | who could stand?
- <sup>4</sup> But with you there is for- | givenness,\*  
that you | may be feared.
- <sup>5</sup> I wait for the LORD, my | soul waits,\*  
and in his | word I hope;
- <sup>6</sup> my soul waits for the Lord more than  
watchmen for the | morning,\*  
more than watchmen for the | morning.
- <sup>7</sup> O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the  
LORD there is | steadfast love,\*  
and with him is plentiful re- | demption.
- <sup>8</sup> And he will redeem | Israel\*  
from all his in- | iquities.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 131

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes  
are not | raised too high;\*  
I do not occupy myself with things too  
great and too marvel- | ous for me.
- <sup>2</sup> But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like  
a weaned child with its | mother,\*  
like a weaned child is my soul  
with- | in me.
- <sup>3</sup> O Israel, hope | in the LORD\*  
from this time forth and for- | evermore.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 132

- <sup>1</sup> Remember, O LORD, in David's | favor,\*  
all the hardships | he endured,
- <sup>2</sup> how he swore | to the LORD\*  
and vowed to the Mighty One of | Jacob,
- <sup>3</sup> "I will not en- | ter my house\*  
or get in- | to my bed,
- <sup>4</sup> I will not give sleep | to my eyes\*  
or slumber to my | eyelids,
- <sup>5</sup> until I find a place | for the LORD,\*  
a dwelling place for the Mighty One  
of | Jacob."
- <sup>6</sup> Behold, we heard of it in | Ephrathah;\*  
we found it in the | fields of Jaar.
- <sup>7</sup> "Let us go to his | dwelling place;\*  
let us worship at his | footstool!"
- <sup>8</sup> Arise, O LORD, and go  
to your | resting place,\*  
you and the ark | of your might.
- <sup>9</sup> Let your priests be clothed  
with | righteousness,\*  
and let your saints | shout for joy.
- <sup>10</sup> For the sake of your servant | David,\*  
do not turn away the face  
of your a- | nointed one.
- <sup>11</sup> The LORD swore to David a sure oath from  
which he will | not turn back.\*  
"One of the sons of your body  
I will set | on your throne.
- <sup>12</sup> If your sons keep my covenant and my  
testimonies that I shall | teach them,\*  
their sons also forever shall sit | on  
your throne."
- <sup>13</sup> For the LORD has chosen | Zion;\*  
he has desired it for his | dwelling place:
- <sup>14</sup> "This is my resting place for- | ever;\*  
here I will dwell, for I have de- | sired it.
- <sup>15</sup> I will abundantly bless her pro- | visions;\*  
I will satisfy her | poor with bread.
- <sup>16</sup> Her priests I will clothe with sal- | vation,\*  
and her saints will | shout for joy.

- <sup>17</sup> There I will make a horn to sprout  
for | David;\*
- I have prepared a lamp for my a- | nointed.
- <sup>18</sup> His enemies I will | clothe with shame,\*  
but on him his | crown will shine.”
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 133

- <sup>1</sup> Behold, how good and pleas- | ant it is\*  
when brothers dwell in | unity!
- <sup>2</sup> It is like the precious oil on the head,  
running down on the beard, on the beard  
of | Aaron,\*  
running down on the collar | of his robes!
- <sup>3</sup> It is like the dew of Hermon,  
which falls on the mountains of | Zion!\*
- For there the LORD has commanded  
the blessing, life for- | evermore.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 134

- <sup>1</sup> Come, bless the LORD, all you servants | of  
the LORD,\*  
who stand by night in the house | of the  
LORD!
- <sup>2</sup> Lift up your hands to the | holy place\*  
and | bless the LORD!
- <sup>3</sup> May the LORD bless you from | Zion,\*  
he who made | heaven and earth!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 135

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise the name | of  
the LORD,\*  
give praise, O servants | of the LORD,  
<sup>2</sup> who stand in the house | of the LORD,\*  
in the courts of the house | of our God!
- <sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD, for the | LORD is good,\*  
sing to his name, for it is | pleasant!
- <sup>4</sup> For the LORD has chosen Jacob | for himself,\*  
Israel as his own pos- | session.
- <sup>5</sup> For I know that the | LORD is great,\*  
and that our Lord is a- | bove all gods.
- <sup>6</sup> Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in  
heaven | and on earth,\*  
in the seas and | all deeps.
- <sup>7</sup> He it is who makes the clouds rise at the  
end | of the earth,\*  
who makes lightnings  
for the rain and brings forth  
the wind from his | storehouses.
- <sup>8</sup> He it was who struck down  
the firstborn of | Egypt,\*  
both of man | and of beast;
- <sup>9</sup> who in your midst, O | Egypt,\*  
sent signs and wonders against Pharaoh  
and all his | servants;
- <sup>10</sup> who struck down many | nations\*  
and killed | mighty kings,
- <sup>11</sup> Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king  
of | Bashan,\*  
and all the kingdoms of | Canaan,
- <sup>12</sup> and gave their land as a | heritage,\*  
a heritage to his people | Israel.
- <sup>13</sup> Your name, O LORD, endures for- | ever,\*  
your renown, O LORD,  
throughout all | ages.
- <sup>14</sup> For the LORD will vindicate his | people\*  
and have compassion on his | servants.

<sup>15</sup> The idols of the nations are sil- | ver and gold,\*  
 the work of | human hands.  
<sup>16</sup> They have mouths, but | do not speak;\*  
 they have eyes, but | do not see;  
<sup>17</sup> they have ears, but | do not hear,\*  
 nor is there any breath | in their mouths.  
<sup>18</sup> Those who make them be- | come like them,\*  
 so do all who | trust in them!  
<sup>19</sup> O house of Israel, | bless the LORD!\*  
 O house of Aaron, | bless the LORD!  
<sup>20</sup> O house of Levi, | bless the LORD!\*  
 You who fear the LORD, | bless the LORD!  
<sup>21</sup> Blessèd be the LORD from | Zion,\*  
 he who dwells in Jerusalem! | Praise the  
 LORD!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 136

<sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for | he is good,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever.  
<sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the | God of gods,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever.  
<sup>3</sup> Give thanks to the | Lord of lords,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>4</sup> to him who alone does great | wonders,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>5</sup> to him who by understanding  
 made the | heavens,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>6</sup> to him who spread out the earth  
 above the | waters,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>7</sup> to him who made the | great lights,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>8</sup> the sun to rule o- | ver the day,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;

<sup>9</sup> the moon and stars to rule o- | ver the night,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>10</sup> to him who struck down the firstborn  
 of | Egypt,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>11</sup> and brought Israel out from a- | mong them,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>12</sup> with a strong hand and an | outstretched  
 arm,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>13</sup> to him who divided the Red | Sea in two,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>14</sup> and made Israel pass through  
 the | midst of it,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>15</sup> but overthrew Pharaoh and his host  
 in the | Red Sea,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>16</sup> to him who led his people through  
 the | wilderness,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>17</sup> to him who struck down | great kings,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>18</sup> and killed | mighty kings,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>19</sup> Sihon, king of the | Amorites,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>20</sup> and Og, king of | Bashan,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>21</sup> and gave their land as a | heritage,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>22</sup> a heritage to Israel his | servant,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever.  
<sup>23</sup> It is he who remembered us  
 in our | low estate,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>24</sup> and rescued us | from our foes,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever;  
<sup>25</sup> he who gives food | to all flesh,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever.

<sup>26</sup> Give thanks to the God of | heaven,\*  
 for his steadfast love endures for- | ever.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 137

<sup>1</sup> By the waters of Babylon,  
 there we sat | down and wept,\*  
 when we remembered | Zion.  
<sup>2</sup> On the | willows there\*  
 we hung | up our lyres.  
<sup>3</sup> For there our captors required of us songs,  
 and our tormentors, mirth, | saying,\*  
 “Sing us one of the songs of | Zion!”  
<sup>4</sup> How shall we sing the | LORD’s song\*  
 in a | foreign land?  
<sup>5</sup> If I forget you, O Je- | rusalem,\*  
 let my right hand for- | get its skill!  
<sup>6</sup> Let my tongue stick to the roof of my  
 mouth, if I do not re- | member you,\*  
 if I do not set Jerusalem above  
 my | highest joy!  
<sup>7</sup> Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites  
 the day of Je- | rusalem,\*  
 how they said, “Lay it bare, lay it bare,  
 down to its foun- | dations!”  
<sup>8</sup> O daughter of Babylon, doomed  
 to | be destroyed,\*  
 blessed shall he be who repays you with  
 what you have | done to us!  
<sup>9</sup> Blessed shall he be who  
 takes your | little ones\*  
 and dashes them a- | gainst the rock!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### 138

<sup>1</sup> I give you thanks, O LORD, with | my  
 whole heart;\*  
 before the gods I | sing your praise;  
<sup>2</sup> I bow down toward your holy temple  
 and give thanks to your name for your  
 steadfast love and your | faithfulness,\*  
 for you have exalted above all things  
 your name | and your word.  
<sup>3</sup> On the day I called, you | answered me;\*  
 my strength of soul | you increased.  
<sup>4</sup> All the kings of the earth shall give you  
 thanks, | O LORD,\*  
 for they have heard the words | of your  
 mouth,  
<sup>5</sup> and they shall sing of the ways | of  
 the LORD,\*  
 for great is the glory | of the LORD.  
<sup>6</sup> For though the LORD is high,  
 he regards the | lowly,\*  
 but the haughty he knows | from afar.  
<sup>7</sup> Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you  
 pre- | serve my life;\*  
 you stretch out your hand against the  
 wrath of my enemies, and your right  
 hand de- | livers me.  
<sup>8</sup> The LORD will fulfill his pur- | pose  
 for me;\*  
 your steadfast love, O LORD, endures  
 forever. Do not forsake the work | of  
 your hands.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 139

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, you have searched me  
and | known me!\*
- <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I  
rise up; you discern my thoughts | from  
afar.
- <sup>3</sup> You search out my path and my | lying down\*  
and are acquainted with | all my ways.
- <sup>4</sup> Even before a word is | on my tongue,\*  
behold, O LORD, you know it alto- | gether.
- <sup>5</sup> You hem me in, behind | and before,\*  
and lay your hand up- | on me.
- <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonder- | ful for me;\*  
it is high; I cannot | attain it.
- <sup>7</sup> Where shall I go from your | Spirit?\*
- Or where shall I flee from  
your | presence?
- <sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, | you are there!\*
- If I make my bed in Sheol, | you are there!
- <sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the | morning\*  
and dwell in the uttermost parts | of  
the sea,
- <sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall | lead me,\*  
and your right hand shall | hold me.
- <sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness shall | cover me,\*  
and the light about me | be night,"
- <sup>12</sup> even the darkness is not | dark to you;\*  
the night is bright as the day,  
for darkness is as | light with you.
- <sup>13</sup> For you formed my | inward parts;\*  
you knitted me together  
in my | mother's womb.
- <sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and  
wonder- | fully made.\*  
Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it | very well.
- <sup>15</sup> My frame was not hid- | den from you,\*  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths | of  
the earth.

- <sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed substance;  
in your book were written,  
every | one of them,\*  
the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there were | none of them.
- <sup>17</sup> How precious to me are your thoughts, | O  
God!\*
- How vast is the | sum of them!
- <sup>18</sup> If I would count them,  
they are more | than the sand.\*  
I awake, and I am still | with you.
- <sup>19</sup> Oh that you would slay  
the wicked, | O God!\*
- O men of blood, de- | part from me!
- <sup>20</sup> They speak against you with mali- | cious  
intent;\*
- your enemies take your | name in vain!
- <sup>21</sup> Do I not hate those who hate you, | O  
LORD?\*
- And do I not loathe those who  
rise up a- | gainst you?
- <sup>22</sup> I hate them with complete | hatred;\*  
I count them my | enemies.
- <sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and | know my heart!\*
- Try me and | know my thoughts!
- <sup>24</sup> And see if there be any grievous | way  
in me,\*  
and lead me in the way ever- | lasting!
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 140

- <sup>1</sup> Deliver me, O LORD, from | evil men;\*  
preserve me from | violent men,  
<sup>2</sup> who plan evil things | in their heart\*  
and stir up wars con- | tinually.
- <sup>3</sup> They make their tongue sharp  
as a | serpent's,\*  
and under their lips is the ven- | om  
of asps.

- <sup>4</sup> Guard me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from | violent men,\*  
who have planned to trip | up my feet.
- <sup>5</sup> The arrogant have hidden a trap for me,  
and with cords they have | spread a net;\*  
beside the way they have set | snares  
for me.
- <sup>6</sup> I say to the LORD, You | are my God;\*  
give ear to the voice of my pleas for  
mercy, | O LORD!
- <sup>7</sup> O LORD, my Lord, the strength  
of my sal- | vation,\*  
you have covered my head  
in the day of | battle.
- <sup>8</sup> Grant not, O LORD, the desires  
of the | wicked;\*  
do not further their evil plot  
or they will be ex- | alted!
- <sup>9</sup> As for the head of those who sur- | round  
me,\*  
let the mischief of their lips  
over- | whelm them!
- <sup>10</sup> Let burning coals fall up- | on them!\*  
Let them be cast into fire, into miry pits,  
no | more to rise!
- <sup>11</sup> Let not the slanderer be established | in the  
land;\*  
let evil hunt down the violent  
man | speedily!
- <sup>12</sup> I know that the LORD will maintain the  
cause of the af- | flicted,\*  
and will execute justice for the | needy.
- <sup>13</sup> Surely the righteous shall give thanks | to  
your name;\*  
the upright shall dwell in your | presence.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

141

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, I call upon you; hasten | to me!\*  
Give ear to my voice when I | call to you!
- <sup>2</sup> Let my prayer be counted  
as incense be- | fore you,\*  
and the lifting up of my hands  
as the evening | sacrifice!
- <sup>3</sup> Set a guard, O LORD, over | my mouth;\*  
keep watch over the door | of my lips!
- <sup>4</sup> Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to  
busy myself with wicked deeds in company  
with men who work in- | iquity,\*  
and let me not eat of their del- | icacies!
- <sup>5</sup> Let a righteous man strike me—it is a  
kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for  
my head; let my head not re- | fuse it.\*  
Yet my prayer is continually  
against their | evil deeds.
- <sup>6</sup> When their judges are thrown o- | ver  
the cliff,\*  
then they shall hear my words, for they  
are | pleasant.
- <sup>7</sup> As when one plows and breaks | up  
the earth,\*  
so shall our bones be scattered at the  
mouth | of Sheol.
- <sup>8</sup> But my eyes are toward you,  
O | God, my Lord;\*  
in you I seek refuge;  
leave me not de- | fenseless!
- <sup>9</sup> Keep me from the trap  
that they have | laid for me\*  
and from the snares of evil- | doers!
- <sup>10</sup> Let the wicked fall into their | own nets,\*  
while I pass by | safely.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 142

- <sup>1</sup> With my voice I cry out | to the LORD;\*  
with my voice I plead for mercy | to the  
LORD.
- <sup>2</sup> I pour out my complaint be- | fore him;\*  
I tell my trouble be- | fore him.
- <sup>3</sup> When my spirit faints within me,  
you | know my way!\*
- In the path where I walk they have  
hidden a | trap for me.
- <sup>4</sup> Look to the right and see: there is none  
who takes notice | of me;\*  
no refuge remains to me;  
no one cares | for my soul.
- <sup>5</sup> I cry to you, | O LORD;\*  
I say, "You are my refuge, my portion  
in the land of the | living."
- <sup>6</sup> Attend to my cry, for I am brought | very low!\*
- Deliver me from my persecutors, for they  
are too | strong for me!
- <sup>7</sup> Bring me out of prison, that I may give  
thanks | to your name!\*
- The righteous will surround me, for you  
will deal bountifully | with me.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 143

- <sup>1</sup> Hear my prayer, O LORD;  
give ear to my pleas for | mercy!\*
- In your faithfulness answer me,  
in your | righteousness!
- <sup>2</sup> Enter not into judgment with your | servant,\*  
for no one living is righteous be- | fore you.
- <sup>3</sup> For the enemy has pursued my soul; he has  
crushed my life | to the ground;\*  
he has made me sit in darkness  
like | those long dead.

- <sup>4</sup> Therefore my spirit faints with- | in me;\*  
my heart within me | is appalled.
- <sup>5</sup> I remember the days of old; I meditate on  
all that | you have done;\*  
I ponder the work | of your hands.
- <sup>6</sup> I stretch out my | hands to you,\*  
my soul thirsts for you like a | parched  
land.
- <sup>7</sup> Answer me quickly, O LORD!  
My | spirit fails!\*
- Hide not your face from me, lest I  
be like those who go down | to the pit.
- <sup>8</sup> Let me hear in the morning of your  
steadfast love, for in | you I trust.\*  
Make me know the way I should go,  
for to you I lift | up my soul.
- <sup>9</sup> Deliver me from my enemies, | O LORD!\*
- I have fled to you for | refuge!
- <sup>10</sup> Teach me to do your will, for you | are my  
God!\*
- Let your good Spirit lead me on | level  
ground!
- <sup>11</sup> For your name's sake, O LORD, pre- | serve  
my life!\*
- In your righteousness bring my soul out  
of | trouble!
- <sup>12</sup> And in your steadfast love you will cut off  
my | enemies,\*  
and you will destroy all the adversaries  
of my soul, for I am your | servant.
- Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 144

- <sup>1</sup> Blessèd be the | LORD, my rock,\*  
who trains my hands for war, and my  
fingers for | battle;
- <sup>2</sup> he is my steadfast love and my fortress, my  
stronghold and my de- | liverer.\*

my shield and he in whom I take refuge,  
 who subdues peoples | under me.

<sup>3</sup> O LORD, what is man that you  
 re- | gard him,\*  
 or the son of man that you | think  
 of him?

<sup>4</sup> Man is | like a breath,\*  
 his days are like a passing | shadow.

<sup>5</sup> Bow your heavens, O LORD, and | come  
 down!\*

Touch the mountains so | that they smoke!

<sup>6</sup> Flash forth the lightning and | scatter them,\*  
 send out your arrows and | rout them!

<sup>7</sup> Stretch out your hand | from on high,\*  
 rescue me and deliver me from the many  
 waters, from the hand of | foreigners,

<sup>8</sup> whose mouths | speak lies\*  
 and whose right hand is a right hand  
 of | falsehood.

<sup>9</sup> I will sing a new song to you, | O God,\*  
 upon a ten-stringed harp I will | play  
 to you,

<sup>10</sup> who gives victo- | ry to kings,\*  
 who rescues David his servant  
 from the | cruel sword.

<sup>11</sup> Rescue me and deliver me from  
 the hand of | foreigners,\*  
 whose mouths speak lies and whose right  
 hand is a right hand of | falsehood.

<sup>12</sup> May our sons in their youth be like | plants  
 full grown,\*  
 our daughters like corner pillars cut  
 for the structure of a | palace;

<sup>13</sup> may our granaries be full, providing all  
 kinds of | produce;\*  
 may our sheep bring forth thousands  
 and ten thousands | in our fields;

<sup>14</sup> may our cattle be heavy with young,  
 suffering no mishap or failure in | bearing;\*  
 may there be no cry of distress | in our  
 streets!

<sup>15</sup> Blessed are the people to whom  
 such | blessings fall!\*

Blessèd are the people whose God | is  
 the LORD!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 145

<sup>1</sup> I will extol you, my | God and King,\*  
 and bless your name forever and | ever.

<sup>2</sup> Every day I will | bless you\*  
 and praise your name forever and | ever.

<sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD, and greatly | to be  
 praised,\*  
 and his greatness is un- | searchable.

<sup>4</sup> One generation shall commend your works  
 to an- | other,\*  
 and shall declare your | mighty acts.

<sup>5</sup> On the glorious splendor of your | majesty,\*  
 and on your wondrous works,  
 I will | meditate.

<sup>6</sup> They shall speak of the might  
 of your | awesome deeds,\*  
 and I will declare your | greatness.

<sup>7</sup> They shall pour forth the fame  
 of your abundant | goodness\*  
 and shall sing aloud  
 of your | righteousness.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and | merciful,\*  
 slow to anger and abounding  
 in | steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD is | good to all,\*  
 and his mercy is over all that | he has  
 made.

<sup>10</sup> All your works shall give thanks  
 to you, | O LORD,\*  
 and all your saints shall | bless you!

- <sup>11</sup> They shall speak of the glory  
of your | kingdom\*  
and tell | of your power,  
<sup>12</sup> to make known to the children of man  
your | mighty deeds,\*  
and the glorious splendor  
of your | kingdom.  
<sup>13</sup> Your kingdom is an everlasting | kingdom,\*  
and your dominion endures throughout  
all gener- | ations.  
The LORD is faithful in | all his words\*  
and kind in | all his works.  
<sup>14</sup> The LORD upholds all who are | falling\*  
and raises up all who are | bowed down.  
<sup>15</sup> The eyes of all | look to you,\*  
and you give them their food  
in due | season.  
<sup>16</sup> You open | your hand;\*  
you satisfy the desire of every | living  
thing.  
<sup>17</sup> The LORD is righteous in | all his ways\*  
and kind in | all his works.  
<sup>18</sup> The LORD is near to all who | call on him,\*  
to all who call on | him in truth.  
<sup>19</sup> He fulfills the desire of those who | fear  
him;\*  
he also hears their cry and | saves them.  
<sup>20</sup> The LORD preserves all who | love him,\*  
but all the wicked he | will destroy.  
<sup>21</sup> My mouth will speak the praise | of  
the LORD,\*  
and let all flesh bless his holy name  
forever and | ever.  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 146

- <sup>1</sup> Praise | the LORD!\*  
Praise the LORD, | O my soul!  
<sup>2</sup> I will praise the LORD as long | as I live;\*  
I will sing praises to my God while  
I have my | being.  
<sup>3</sup> Put not your trust in | princes,\*  
in a son of man, in whom  
there is no sal- | vation.  
<sup>4</sup> When his breath departs he returns | to  
the earth;\*  
on that very day his plans | perish.  
<sup>5</sup> Blessed is he whose help  
is the God of | Jacob,\*  
whose hope is in the | LORD his God,  
<sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth, the sea,  
and all that is | in them,\*  
who keeps faith for- | ever;  
<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for | the oppressed,\*  
who gives food to the | hungry.  
The LORD sets the prisoners free; <sup>8</sup> the LORD  
opens the eyes | of the blind.\*  
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed  
down; the LORD loves the | righteous.  
<sup>9</sup> The LORD watches over the sojourners;  
he upholds the widow and the | fatherless,\*  
but the way of the wicked  
he brings to | ruin.  
<sup>10</sup> The LORD will reign for- | ever,\*  
your God, O Zion,  
to all generations. | Praise the LORD!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

147

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing  
praises | to our God;\*  
for it is pleasant, and a song  
of praise is | fitting.
- <sup>2</sup> The LORD builds up Je- | rusalem;\*  
he gathers the outcasts of | Israel.
- <sup>3</sup> He heals the broken- | hearted\*  
and binds | up their wounds.
- <sup>4</sup> He determines the number | of the stars;\*  
he gives to all of | them their names.
- <sup>5</sup> Great is our Lord, and abun- | dant  
in power;\*  
his understanding is beyond | measure.
- <sup>6</sup> The LORD lifts up the | humble;\*  
he casts the wicked | to the ground.
- <sup>7</sup> Sing to the LORD with thanks- | giving;\*  
make melody to our God | on the lyre!
- <sup>8</sup> He covers the heavens with clouds;  
he prepares rain | for the earth;\*  
he makes grass grow | on the hills.
- <sup>9</sup> He gives to the | beasts their food,\*  
and to the young ravens | that cry.
- <sup>10</sup> His delight is not in the strength | of  
the horse,\*  
nor his pleasure in the legs | of a man,  
<sup>11</sup> but the LORD takes pleasure  
in those who | fear him,\*  
in those who hope in his | steadfast love.
- <sup>12</sup> Praise the LORD, O Je- | rusalem!\*  
Praise your God, O | Zion!
- <sup>13</sup> For he strengthens the bars | of your gates,\*  
he blesses your children with- | in you.
- <sup>14</sup> He makes peace in your | borders;\*  
he fills you with the finest | of the wheat.
- <sup>15</sup> He sends out his command | to the earth;\*  
his word runs | swiftly.
- <sup>16</sup> He gives | snow like wool;\*  
he scatters hoarfrost like | ashes.

- <sup>17</sup> He hurls down his crystals of | ice  
like crumbs;\*  
who can stand be- | fore his cold?
- <sup>18</sup> He sends out his word, and | melts them;\*  
he makes his wind blow  
and the | waters flow.
- <sup>19</sup> He declares his word to | Jacob,\*  
his statutes and just decrees to | Israel.
- <sup>20</sup> He has not dealt thus with  
any other | nation;\*  
they do not know his just  
decrees. | Praise the LORD!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

148

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from  
the | heavens;\*  
praise him | in the heights!
- <sup>2</sup> Praise him, all his | angels;\*  
praise him, | all his hosts!
- <sup>3</sup> Praise him, | sun and moon,\*  
praise him, all you | shining stars!
- <sup>4</sup> Praise him, you highest | heavens,\*  
and you waters above the | heavens!
- <sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name | of the LORD!\*  
For he commanded and  
they were cre- | ated.
- <sup>6</sup> And he established them forever  
and | ever;\*  
he gave a decree,  
and it shall not | pass away.
- <sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD | from the earth,\*  
you great sea creatures and | all deeps,  
<sup>8</sup> fire and hail, | snow and mist,\*  
stormy wind fulfill- | ing his word!
- <sup>9</sup> Mountains and | all hills,\*  
fruit trees and all | cedars!

- <sup>10</sup> Beasts and all | livestock,\*  
 creeping things and | flying birds!  
<sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth and all | peoples,\*  
 princes and all rulers | of the earth!  
<sup>12</sup> Young men and maidens to- | gether,\*  
 old men and | children!  
<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, for  
 his name alone is ex- | alted,\*  
 his majesty is above earth and | heaven.  
<sup>14</sup> He has raised up a horn for his people,  
 praise for | all his saints,\*  
 for the people of Israel who are near to  
 him. | Praise the LORD!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 149

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a | new  
 song,\*  
 his praise in the assembly of the | godly!  
<sup>2</sup> Let Israel be glad in his | Maker;\*  
 let the children of Zion rejoice | in their  
 King!  
<sup>3</sup> Let them praise his name with | dancing,\*  
 making melody to him  
 with tambou- | rine and lyre!  
<sup>4</sup> For the LORD takes pleasure  
 in his | people;\*  
 he adorns the humble with sal- | vation.  
<sup>5</sup> Let the godly exult in | glory,\*  
 let them sing for joy | on their beds.  
<sup>6</sup> Let the high praises of God be | in  
 their throats\*  
 and two-edged swords | in their hands,

- <sup>7</sup> to execute vengeance on the | nations\*  
 and punishments on the | peoples,  
<sup>8</sup> to bind their | kings with chains\*  
 and their nobles with fet- | ters of iron,  
<sup>9</sup> to execute on them the judgment | written!\*  
 This is honor for all his  
 godly ones. | Praise the LORD!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## 150

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise God  
 in his sanctu- | ary;\*  
 praise him in his mighty | heavens!  
<sup>2</sup> Praise him for his | mighty deeds,\*  
 praise him according  
 to his excellent | greatness!  
<sup>3</sup> Praise him with | trumpet sound,\*  
 praise him with | lute and harp!  
<sup>4</sup> Praise him with tambou- | rine and dance;\*  
 praise him with | strings and pipe!  
<sup>5</sup> Praise him with sounding | cymbals,\*  
 praise him with loud clashing | cymbals!  
<sup>6</sup> Let everything that has breath | praise  
 the LORD!\*  
 Praise | the LORD!  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**



# SELECTED CANTICLES

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## OLD TESTAMENT CANTICLES

### Exodus 15:1–18

*Antiphon or Refrain:* I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation;
- <sup>2</sup> this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.
- <sup>3</sup> The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name.
- <sup>4</sup> Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea.
- <sup>5</sup> The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone.
- <sup>6</sup> Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power, your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.
- <sup>7</sup> In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries; you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble.
- <sup>8</sup> At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.
- <sup>9</sup> The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.'
- <sup>10</sup> You blew with your wind; the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters.

- <sup>11</sup> Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?
- <sup>12</sup> You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them.
- <sup>13</sup> You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.
- <sup>14</sup> The peoples have heard; they tremble; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.
- <sup>15</sup> Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.
- <sup>16</sup> Terror and dread fall upon them; because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone, till your people, O LORD, pass by, till the people pass by whom you have purchased.
- <sup>17</sup> You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O LORD, which your hands have established.
- <sup>18</sup> The LORD will reign forever and ever." 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.

**Deuteronomy 32:1–18**

*Antiphon or Refrain:* I will proclaim  
the name of the LORD; ascribe  
greatness to our God!

- <sup>1</sup> “Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.  
<sup>2</sup> May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb.  
<sup>3</sup> For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God!  
<sup>4</sup> “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.  
<sup>5</sup> They have dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer his children because they are blemished; they are a crooked and twisted generation.  
<sup>6</sup> Do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?  
<sup>7</sup> Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you.  
<sup>8</sup> When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.  
<sup>9</sup> But the LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.  
<sup>10</sup> “He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.  
<sup>11</sup> Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions,

- <sup>12</sup> the LORD alone guided him, no foreign god was with him.  
<sup>13</sup> He made him ride on the high places of the land, and he ate the produce of the field, and he suckled him with honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.  
<sup>14</sup> Curds from the herd, and milk from the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats, with the very finest of the wheat— and you drank foaming wine made from the blood of the grape.  
<sup>15</sup> “But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek; then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.  
<sup>16</sup> They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger.  
<sup>17</sup> They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded.  
<sup>18</sup> You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth.

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.

**Deuteronomy 32:19–43**

*Antiphon or Refrain:* The LORD  
will vindicate His people and have  
compassion on His servants.

- <sup>1</sup> “The LORD saw it and spurned them, because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters.  
<sup>2</sup> And he said, ‘I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness.  
<sup>3</sup> They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with

- their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.
- <sup>4</sup> For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.
- <sup>5</sup> “And I will heap disasters upon them; I will spend my arrows on them;
- <sup>6</sup> they shall be wasted with hunger, and devoured by plague and poisonous pestilence; I will send the teeth of beasts against them, with the venom of things that crawl in the dust.
- <sup>7</sup> Outdoors the sword shall bereave, and indoors terror, for young man and woman alike, the nursing child with the man of gray hairs.
- <sup>8</sup> I would have said, “I will cut them to pieces; I will wipe them from human memory,”
- <sup>9</sup> had I not feared provocation by the enemy, lest their adversaries should misunderstand, lest they should say, “Our hand is triumphant, it was not the LORD who did all this.”’
- <sup>10</sup> “For they are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them.
- <sup>11</sup> If they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their latter end!
- <sup>12</sup> How could one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had given them up?
- <sup>13</sup> For their rock is not as our Rock; our enemies are by themselves.
- <sup>14</sup> For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison; their clusters are bitter;
- <sup>15</sup> their wine is the poison of serpents and the cruel venom of asps.
- <sup>16</sup> “Is not this laid up in store with me, sealed up in my treasuries?
- <sup>17</sup> Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.’
- <sup>18</sup> For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.
- <sup>19</sup> Then he will say, ‘Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge,
- <sup>20</sup> who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection!
- <sup>21</sup> “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
- <sup>22</sup> For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever,
- <sup>23</sup> if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me.
- <sup>24</sup> I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh—with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy.’
- <sup>25</sup> Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people’s land.”
- 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.

**1 Samuel 2:1–10**

*Antiphon or Refrain:* My heart exults in the LORD; I rejoice in your salvation.

- <sup>1</sup> My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.
- <sup>2</sup> There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.
- <sup>3</sup> Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by his actions are weighed.
- <sup>4</sup> The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength.
- <sup>5</sup> Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.
- <sup>6</sup> The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts.
- <sup>8</sup> He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world.
- <sup>9</sup> "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail.
- <sup>10</sup> The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed."

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.

**1 Chronicles 29:10–13**

*Antiphon or Refrain:* We thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.

- <sup>1</sup> "Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever.
- <sup>2</sup> Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all.
- <sup>3</sup> Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.
- <sup>4</sup> And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name."

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.

**Isaiah 9:2–7**

*Antiphon or Refrain:* For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

- <sup>1</sup> The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.
- <sup>2</sup> You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
- <sup>3</sup> For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- <sup>4</sup> For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.
- <sup>5</sup> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>6</sup> Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

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.

### Isaiah 11:1–9

*Antiphon or Refrain:* There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

<sup>1</sup> There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

<sup>2</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

<sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

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.

### Isaiah 12:1–6

*Antiphon or Refrain:* Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously.

<sup>1</sup> You will say in that day: "I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me.

<sup>2</sup> Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation."

<sup>3</sup> With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

<sup>4</sup> And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup> Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

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.

**Isaiah 38:10–20**

*Antiphon or Refrain:* The LORD will save me, and we will play my music on stringed instruments all the days of our lives, at the house of the LORD.

- <sup>1</sup> I said, In the middle of my days I must depart; I am consigned to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my years.
- <sup>2</sup> I said, I shall not see the LORD, the LORD in the land of the living; I shall look on man no more among the inhabitants of the world.
- <sup>3</sup> My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent; like a weaver I have rolled up my life; he cuts me off from the loom; from day to night you bring me to an end;
- <sup>4</sup> I calmed myself until morning; like a lion he breaks all my bones; from day to night you bring me to an end.
- <sup>5</sup> Like a swallow or a crane I chirp; I moan like a dove. My eyes are weary with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; be my pledge of safety!
- <sup>6</sup> What shall I say? For he has spoken to me, and he himself has done it. I walk slowly all my years because of the bitterness of my soul.
- <sup>7</sup> O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit. Oh restore me to health and make me live!
- <sup>8</sup> Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back.
- <sup>9</sup> For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness.
- <sup>10</sup> The living, the living, he thanks you, as I do this day; the father makes known to the children your faithfulness.

- <sup>11</sup> The LORD will save me, and we will play my music on stringed instruments all the days of our lives, at the house of the LORD. 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.

**Isaiah 45:15–25**

*Antiphon or Refrain:* Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

- <sup>1</sup> Truly, you are a God who hides himself, O God of Israel, the Savior.
- <sup>2</sup> All of them are put to shame and confounded; the makers of idols go in confusion together.
- <sup>3</sup> But Israel is saved by the LORD with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity.
- <sup>4</sup> For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): I am the LORD, and there is no other.
- <sup>5</sup> I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in vain.' I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right.
- <sup>6</sup> Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save.
- <sup>7</sup> Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me.
- <sup>8</sup> Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

<sup>9</sup> By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’

<sup>10</sup> Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed all who were incensed against him.

<sup>11</sup> In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory.

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.

### Jonah 2:2–9

*Antiphon or Refrain:* Salvation belongs to the LORD!

<sup>1</sup> I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.

<sup>2</sup> For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me.

<sup>3</sup> Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.’

<sup>4</sup> The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head

<sup>5</sup> at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.

<sup>6</sup> When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.

<sup>7</sup> Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love.

<sup>8</sup> But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!

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.

### Jeremiah 31:10–14

*Antiphon or Refrain:* For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

<sup>1</sup> “Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’

<sup>2</sup> For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

<sup>3</sup> They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more.

<sup>4</sup> Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

<sup>5</sup> I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the LORD.”

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.

**Habakkuk 3:2–11**

*Antiphon or Refrain:* His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.
- <sup>2</sup> God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.
- <sup>3</sup> His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power.
- <sup>4</sup> Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels.
- <sup>5</sup> He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways.
- <sup>6</sup> I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.
- <sup>7</sup> Was your wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation?
- <sup>8</sup> You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. You split the earth with rivers.
- <sup>9</sup> The mountains saw you and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice; it lifted its hands on high.
- <sup>10</sup> The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear.

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.

**Habakkuk 3:13–19**

*Antiphon or Refrain:* I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

- <sup>1</sup> You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck.
- <sup>2</sup> You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret.
- <sup>3</sup> You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters.
- <sup>4</sup> I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.
- <sup>5</sup> Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,
- <sup>6</sup> yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.
- <sup>7</sup> GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

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.

## LITURGICAL CANTICLES

### Venite (Matins)—Psalm 95:1–7

- <sup>1</sup> O come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving, let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise.
- <sup>2</sup> For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods. The deep places of the earth are in His hand; the strength of the hills is His also.
- <sup>3</sup> The sea is His, for He made it, and His hand formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our maker.
- <sup>4</sup> For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. 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.

### Te Deum (Matins)

- <sup>1</sup> We praise You, O God; we acknowledge You to be the Lord, All the earth now worships You, the Father everlasting. To You all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the pow'rs therein. To You cherubim and seraphim continually do cry:
- <sup>2</sup> Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Your glory. The glorious company of the apostles praise You. The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise You.
- <sup>3</sup> The noble army of martyrs praise You. The holy Church throughout all the world does acknowledge You: The Father of an infinite majesty; Your adorable, true, and only Son; also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.
- <sup>4</sup> You are the king of glory, O Christ; You are the everlasting Son of the Father.

- <sup>5</sup> When You took upon Yourself to deliver man, You humbled Yourself to be born of a virgin. When You had overcome the sharpness of death, You opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
- <sup>6</sup> You sit at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father. We believe that You will come to be our judge.
- <sup>7</sup> We therefore pray You to help Your servants, whom You have redeemed with Your precious blood. Make them to be numbered with Your saints in glory everlasting.
- <sup>8</sup> O Lord, save Your people and bless Your heritage. Govern them and lift them up forever. Day by day we magnify You. And we worship Your name forever and ever.
- <sup>9</sup> Grant, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin. O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us. O Lord, let Your mercy be upon us, as our trust is in You. O Lord, in You have I trusted; let me never be confounded.

### The Benedictus (Matins)—Luke 1:68–79

- <sup>1</sup> Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He has visited and redeemed His people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David,
- <sup>2</sup> as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;
- <sup>3</sup> to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath that He swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we,

<sup>4</sup> being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

<sup>5</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins,

<sup>6</sup> through the tender mercy of our God; when the day shall dawn upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace.

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.

### **The Magnificat (Vespers)—Luke 1:46–55**

<sup>1</sup> My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior;

<sup>2</sup> for He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.

<sup>3</sup> For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.

<sup>4</sup> For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;

<sup>5</sup> and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

<sup>6</sup> He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

<sup>7</sup> He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted the lowly.

<sup>8</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.

<sup>9</sup> He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.

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.

### **Nunc Dimittis (Post-Communion Canticle)—Luke 2:29–32**

Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of ev'ry people: A light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now and be forever. Amen.

### **Athanasian Creed**

<sup>1</sup> Whoever desires to be saved must, above all else, hold the catholic faith.

<sup>2</sup> Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally.

<sup>3</sup> And the catholic faith is this,

<sup>4</sup> that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.

<sup>5</sup> For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another.

<sup>6</sup> But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

<sup>7</sup> Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit:

<sup>8</sup> the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated;

<sup>9</sup> the Father infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite.

<sup>10</sup> The Father eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal.

<sup>11</sup> And yet there are not three eternal but one Eternal,  
<sup>12</sup> Just as there are not three Uncreated or three Infinities, but One Uncreated and One Infinite.  
<sup>13</sup> In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty;  
<sup>14</sup> And yet there are not three Almighty, but one Almighty.  
<sup>15</sup> So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God;  
<sup>16</sup> and yet there are not three Gods, but one God.  
<sup>17</sup> So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord;  
<sup>18</sup> and yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.  
<sup>19</sup> Just as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so also are we prohibited by the catholic religion to say that there are three Gods or Lords.  
<sup>20</sup> The Father is not made nor created nor begotten by anyone.  
<sup>21</sup> The Son is neither made nor created, but begotten of the Father alone.  
<sup>22</sup> The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.  
<sup>23</sup> Thus, there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.  
<sup>24</sup> And in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another;  
<sup>25</sup> but the whole three persons are coeternal with each other and coequal, so that in all things, as has been stated above, the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped.

<sup>26</sup> Therefore, whoever desires to be saved must think thus about the Trinity.  
<sup>27</sup> But it is also necessary for everlasting salvation that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man.  
<sup>29</sup> He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before the ages; and He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age:  
<sup>30</sup> perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh;  
<sup>31</sup> equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity.  
<sup>32</sup> Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ:  
<sup>33</sup> one, however, not by conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God;  
<sup>34</sup> one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.  
<sup>35</sup> For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ,  
<sup>36</sup> who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead,  
<sup>37</sup> ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.  
<sup>38</sup> At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds.  
<sup>39</sup> And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire.  
<sup>40</sup> This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved.





# SCHEDULE FOR READING THE PSALMS OVER THIRTY DAYS

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## First Day

Morning Prayer 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
Evening Prayer 6, 7, 8

## Second Day

Morning Prayer 9, 10, 11  
Evening Prayer 12, 13, 14

## Third Day

Morning Prayer 15, 16, 17  
Evening Prayer 18

## Fourth Day

Morning Prayer 19, 20, 21  
Evening Prayer 22, 23

## Fifth Day

Morning Prayer 24, 25, 26  
Evening Prayer 27, 28, 29

## Sixth Day

Morning Prayer 30, 31  
Evening Prayer 32, 33, 34

## Seventh Day

Morning Prayer 35, 36  
Evening Prayer 37

## Eighth Day

Morning Prayer 38, 39, 40  
Evening Prayer 41, 42, 43

## Ninth Day

Morning Prayer 44, 45, 46  
Evening Prayer 47, 48, 49

## Tenth Day

Morning Prayer 50, 51, 52  
Evening Prayer 53, 54, 55

## Eleventh Day

Morning Prayer 56, 57, 58  
Evening Prayer 59, 60, 61

## Twelfth Day

Morning Prayer 62, 63, 64  
Evening Prayer 65, 66, 67

## Thirteenth Day

Morning Prayer 68  
Evening Prayer 69, 70

## Fourteenth Day

Morning Prayer 71, 72  
Evening Prayer 73, 74

## Fifteenth Day

Morning Prayer 75, 76, 77  
Evening Prayer 78

## Sixteenth Day

Morning Prayer 79, 80, 81  
Evening Prayer 82, 83, 84, 85

## Seventeenth Day

Morning Prayer 86, 87, 88  
Evening Prayer 89

## Eighteenth Day

Morning Prayer 90, 91, 92  
Evening Prayer 93, 94

**Nineteenth Day**

Morning Prayer 95, 96, 97      Evening Prayer 98, 99, 100, 101

**Twentieth Day**

Morning Prayer 102, 103      Evening Prayer 104

**Twenty-first Day**

Morning Prayer 105      Evening Prayer 106

**Twenty-second Day**

Morning Prayer 107      Evening Prayer 108, 109

**Twenty-third Day**

Morning Prayer 110, 111, 112, 113      Evening Prayer 114, 115

**Twenty-fourth Day**

Morning Prayer 116, 117, 118      Evening Prayer 119:1-32

**Twenty-fifth Day**

Morning Prayer 119:33-72      Evening Prayer 119:73-104

**Twenty-sixth Day**

Morning Prayer 119:105-144      Evening Prayer 119:145-176

**Twenty-seventh Day**

Morning Prayer 120, 121, 122, 126, 127, 128,      Evening Prayer 123, 124, 125 129, 130, 131

**Twenty-eighth Day**

Morning Prayer 132, 133, 134, 135      Evening Prayer 136, 137, 138

**Twenty-ninth Day**

Morning Prayer 139, 140      Evening Prayer 141, 142, 143

**Thirtieth Day**

Morning Prayer 144, 145, 146      Evening Prayer 147, 148, 149, 150



# SCHEDULE OF THE PSALMS FOR THE DAILY OFFICE

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## ODD AND EVEN WEEKS

Over a two-week period, one can sing all 150 psalms during the Divine Office. To do this, they are split between “odd” weeks and “even” weeks.

When the previous Sunday is an odd number (1st week in Lent, 3rd week in Easter, 21st week after Pentecost), the odd-week cycle is used. If the previous Sunday is an even number, then the even-week cycle is used.

## EVEN WEEKS PSALM SCHEDULE

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
VIGILS						
		56		26		6
29	11	70	61	49	13	8
30	37	71	74	79	17	19
31	52	75	81	83	55	50
34	105	82	107	142	109	72
66		94		144	140	76
LAUDS						
51	36	39	65		63	40
118	103	57	86	32	92	143
150	116	146	147	90	148	149
TERCE						
119, XII–XV			120, 121, 122			
SEXT						
	123	129	123	129	123	129
118	124	130	124	130	124	130
	125	131	125	131	125	131

NONE						
	126		126		126	
119, XIX-XXII	127	132	127	132	127	132
	128	133	128	133	128	133
VESPERS						
	10	95	77	33		23
	53	117	104	135	41	69
	67	134	108	141	99	100
COMPLINE						
4 AND 91						

### ODD WEEKS PSALM SCHEDULE

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
VIGILS						
				21		1
18	14	44	12	58	3	20
25	15	62	42	59	7	80
27	35	77	43	60	16	85
28	54	139	78	137	89	87
	106		84	145		103
LAUDS						
51	5	86	64	88	6	38
118	50	73	102	101	76	113
150	111	112	116	114	115	143
TERCE						
119, I-IV			120, 121, 122			

SEXT

	123	129	123	129	123	129
119, V-VII	124	130	124	130	124	130
	125	131	125	131	125	131

NONE

	126		126		126	
119, VII-XI	127	132	127	132	127	132
	128	133	128	133	128	133

VESPERS

2	39		46			24
47	48	68	136	9	22	45
110	96	97	98	36	93	138

COMPLINE

4 AND 91



**COPY HERE**

LUTHER'S  
SMALL  
CATECHISM





# PRAYING LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

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Dear Christian, do not be content to let the Word of God lie, as if inert, on the page of a book. The Word of God is a lively and life-giving Word. Luther prepared his Small Catechism to put the Word of God not only in your heart but on your lips. You may have thought of the Small Catechism as a textbook to be studied in preparation for confirmation and set aside thereafter. But Luther designed his summary of Christian doctrine to serve the Christian not only as a textbook to be studied but even more as a prayer book and an operator's manual for daily living.

Luther's Small Catechism is divided into Six Chief Parts. The first three, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, provide the very shape of the Christian life.

The Ten Commandments are a summary of God's word of Law, by which He tells you what you are to do and not do. In the praying of these commands, the Lord teaches you that you are a sinner who does not love and trust in Him above all things and who does not live in the way He created you to live. The Commandments are words of repentance and are important words to include in our prayers because they teach you that it is impossible to save yourself.

The Apostles' Creed, in turn, is a summary of God's word of Gospel. It is a word of faith that confesses what the Holy Trinity has done, is doing, and will do for you, your life, and your salvation—centering

in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

When you pray the Creed, you give glory to God and learn to think of yourself the way God thinks of you in Christ. You edify and encourage people around you as you recount to them the saving deeds of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In the Lord's Prayer, the Christian is taught by Jesus to call upon God "with all boldness and confidence . . . as dear children ask their dear father," using the very commands and promises of God Himself. Praying in this way is living the holy life—a life that has been made holy by the Word that has taken residence in you, entering your ear, lodging in your heart, and sounding forth from your lips.

These first three parts shape the Christian life of repentance, faith, and holy living. The last three parts teach you how this Christian life is brought to you and sustained in you.

In the next section, Luther teaches Confession and Absolution as the practice of living in the truth. When you confess your sins, you are telling the truth about yourself. You are saying what God says about you in His Law, that you are a sinner who deserves nothing but temporal and eternal punishment. When you receive Absolution, you are hearing an even greater truth about yourself: namely, that Christ has taken away your sin and you stand forgiven. You receive forgiveness from the pastor as from God

Himself, for it is Christ who is speaking to you through the Absolution you hear.

The last of the Six Chief Parts shows us the Sacrament of the Altar is the very body and blood of Christ, who was given into death for your sin and raised to life for your justification. Eaten and drunk in faith, trusting what the Lord promises to give with His body and blood—the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation—the faith received in Baptism is supported and strengthened.

These parts teach the ways in which Christ and all His benefits are brought to bear upon you, taking root and sustaining you in the Christian life. The remaining sections of the Small Catechism, the Daily Prayers, and the Table of Duties continue to teach and train you in a life of daily prayer and service to both God and neighbor.

The Small Catechism summarizes the entire Holy Scriptures and puts them in a prayable form so as to be readily heard with your ears, believed in your heart, and spoken by your lips. As you pray and meditate upon these chief parts, the catechism teaches you

how to live the new life given you in your Baptism. Because you have been made a new person in Christ, the old Adam in you is not to be indulged, tolerated, or even reformed. The baptismal life calls for the mortification of your old Adam through daily contrition and repentance and the living of that new life that clings to Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

As you learn to use this prayer book, consider and take to heart the words of Dr. Luther: “But for myself I say this: I am also a doctor and preacher; yes, as learned and experienced as all the people who have such assumptions and contentment. Yet I act as a child who is being taught the catechism. Every morning—and whenever I have time—I read and say, word for word, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Psalms, and such. I must still read and study them daily. Yet I cannot master the catechism as I wish. But I must remain a child and pupil of the catechism, and am glad to remain so” (LC Preface 7–8; *Concordia*, p. 353). May such gladness be yours.



# THE SMALL CATECHISM

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## SECTION 1 THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH THEM IN A SIMPLE WAY TO HIS HOUSEHOLD

### **The First Commandment**

You shall have no other gods.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

### **The Second Commandment**

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

### **The Third Commandment**

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

### **The Fourth Commandment**

Honor your father and your mother.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

### **The Fifth Commandment**

You shall not murder.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

### **The Sixth Commandment**

You shall not commit adultery.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

**The Seventh Commandment**

You shall not steal.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

**The Eighth Commandment**

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

**The Ninth Commandment**

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

**The Tenth Commandment**

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maid-servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

[The text of the commandments is from Exodus 20:3, 7, 8, 12-17.]

**The Close of the Commandments**

*What does God say about all these commandments?*

He says: "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments." [Exodus 20:5-6]

*What does this mean?*

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.

## THE CREED

AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH IT IN A SIMPLE WAY TO HIS HOUSEHOLD

### The First Article

#### *Creation*

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth.

#### *What does this mean?*

I believe that God has made me and all  
creatures; that He has given me my body  
and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my  
reason and all my senses, and still takes care  
of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes,  
food and drink, house and home, wife and  
children, land, animals, and all I have. He  
richly and daily provides me with all that I  
need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and  
guards and protects me from all evil. All this  
He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness  
and mercy, without any merit or worthiness  
in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and  
praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

### The Second Article

#### *Redemption*

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.

#### *What does this mean?*

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God,  
begotten of the Father from eternity, and

also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is  
my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and con-  
demned person, purchased and won me from  
all sins, from death, and from the power of  
the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His  
holy, precious blood and with His innocent  
suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him  
in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting  
righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives  
and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

### The Third Article

#### *Sanctification*

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.

#### *What does this mean?*

I believe that I cannot by my own reason  
or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord,  
or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called  
me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His  
gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, en-  
lightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian  
church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus  
Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian Church He daily and  
richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all  
believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all  
the dead, and give eternal life to me and all  
believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH IT IN A SIMPLE WAY TO HIS HOUSEHOLD

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.

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.*

### The Introduction

Our Father who art in heaven.  
*Our Father in heaven.*

*What does this mean?*

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

### The First Petition

Hallowed be Thy name.  
*Hallowed be Your name.*

*What does this mean?*

God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

*How is God's name kept holy?*  
God's name is kept holy when the Word

of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

### The Second Petition

Thy kingdom come.  
*Your kingdom come.*

*What does this mean?*

The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

*How does God's kingdom come?*

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

### The Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
*Your will be done on earth as in heaven.*

*What does this mean?*

The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

*How is God's will done?*

God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens

and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.

### **The Fourth Petition**

Give us this day our daily bread.

*Give us today our daily bread.*

*What does this mean?*

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

*What is meant by daily bread?*

Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

### **The Fifth Petition**

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.*

*What does this mean?*

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

### **The Sixth Petition**

And lead us not into temptation.

*Lead us not into temptation.*

*What does this mean?*

God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.

### **The Seventh Petition**

But deliver us from evil.

*But deliver us from evil.*

*What does this mean?*

We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

### **The Conclusion**

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.\* Amen.

*For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever.\* Amen.*

*What does this mean?*

This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen, amen means “yes, yes, it shall be so.”

\* These words were not in Luther's Small Catechism.

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH IT IN A SIMPLE WAY TO HIS HOUSEHOLD

### First

*What is Baptism?*

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.

*Which is that word of God?*

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." [Matthew 28:19]

### Second

*What benefits does Baptism give?*

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

*Which are these words and promises of God?*

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." [Mark 16:16]

### Third

*How can water do such great things?*

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a

washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three:

"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying." [Titus 3:5-8]

### Fourth

*What does such baptizing with water indicate?*

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

*Where is this written?*

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: "We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." [Romans 6:4]

## CONFESSION

### HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE TAUGHT TO CONFESS

#### *What is Confession?*

Confession has two parts.

First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

#### *What sins should we confess?*

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

#### *Which are these?*

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?

#### *What is the Office of the Keys?\**

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

#### *Where is this written?\**

This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty: The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." [John 20:22-23]

#### *What do you believe according to these words?\**

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

\*This question may not have been composed by Luther himself but reflects his teaching and was included in editions of the catechism during his lifetime.

## THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH IT IN A SIMPLE WAY TO HIS HOUSEHOLD

*What is the Sacrament of the Altar?*

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

*Where is this written?*

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

*What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?*

These words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

*How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?*

Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: "forgiveness of sins."

*Who receives this sacrament worthily?*

Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words "for you" require all hearts to believe.

## SECTION 2

# DAILY PRAYERS

HOW THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH HIS HOUSEHOLD  
TO PRAY MORNING AND EVENING

### Morning Prayer

*In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say:*

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:*

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.

*Then go joyfully to your work, singing a hymn, like that of the Ten Commandments, or whatever your devotion may suggest.*

### Evening Prayer

*In the evening when you go to bed, make the sign of the holy cross and say:*

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Then kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:*

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. 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.

*Then go to sleep at once and in good cheer.*

HOW THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH HIS HOUSEHOLD  
TO ASK A BLESSING AND RETURN THANKS

### Asking a Blessing

*The children and members of the household shall go to the table reverently, fold their hands, and say:*

The eyes of all look to You, [O Lord,] and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. [Psalm 145:15-16]

*Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:*

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts which we receive from Your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### Returning Thanks

*Also, after eating, they shall, in like manner, reverently and with folded hands say:*

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.

His love endures forever. [He] gives food to every creature. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor His delight in the legs of a man; the Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love. [*Psalm 136:1, 25; 147:9–11*]

*Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:*

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

## SECTION 3

### TABLE OF DUTIES

CERTAIN PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE FOR VARIOUS HOLY ORDERS AND POSITIONS,  
ADMONISHING THEM ABOUT THEIR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **To Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers**

The overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. *1 Timothy 3:2–4*

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. *1 Timothy 3:6*

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. *Titus 1:9*

#### **What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors**

The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. *1 Corinthians 9:14*

Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. *Galatians 6:6–7*

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.” *1 Timothy 5:17–18*

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

*1 Thessalonians 5:12–13*

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. *Hebrews 13:17*

#### **Of Civil Government**

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been estab-

lished by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. *Romans 13:1–4*

### Of Citizens

Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s. *Matthew 22:21*

It is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. *Romans 13:5–7*

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior. *1 Timothy 2:1–3*

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good. *Titus 3:1*

Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme

authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. *1 Peter 2:13–14*

### To Husbands

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. *1 Peter 3:7*

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. *Colossians 3:19*

### To Wives

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. *Ephesians 5:22*

They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. *1 Peter 3:5–6*

### To Parents

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. *Ephesians 6:4*

### To Children

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” *Ephesians 6:1–3*

**To Workers of All Kinds**

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. *Ephesians 6:5–8*

**To Employers and Supervisors**

Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him. *Ephesians 6:9*

**To Youth**

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one

another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.

*1 Peter 5:5–6*

**To Widows**

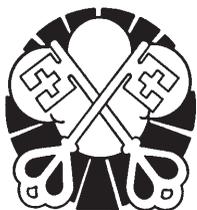
The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. *1 Timothy 5:5–6*

**To Everyone**

The commandments . . . are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” *Romans 13:9*

I urge . . . that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone. *1 Timothy 2:1*

*Let each his lesson learn with care,  
and all the household well shall fare.*



# PREPARATION FOR INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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## BRIEF INSTRUCTION ON CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

My dear Christian, when you go to confession, do not be content with repeating a memorized confessional prayer or with having your pastor repeat it to you. Rather, bring along a penitent heart, from which your confession will flow. To offer confession when the heart is impenitent is mocking God. Without a penitent heart there is no forgiveness of sin.

The first requirement for a penitent heart is that you recognize your sins, feel sorry and repentant of them. By nature no man knows his sins, nor can he by his own doing cause repentance to spring from his heart. On the contrary, repentance comes from God. By nature we are far too blind, too indifferent, too careless, too self-righteous, too much absorbed in self-love and self-conceit, to plead guilty of all sins in the sight of God.

Above all things, therefore, bow your knees before God and call upon Him to open your eyes that you may thoroughly recognize the multitude and magnitude of your sins. Pray in the words of the sainted David: "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me, and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" (Psalm 139:23-24). Make a careful examination of your whole life according to the Ten Commandments. You will then soon find that you are a sinner.

For even as a man does not see a spot on his face without a mirror, so he does not recognize his sins unless he sees himself in the mirror of the holy Ten Commandments. For every thought, every word, every deed against God's commandments is a sin, whether it consists in doing what God has forbidden or in failing to do what He has commanded.

But you must look not only at the large, external sins, but also those internal, secret digressions from God's commandments, the evil thoughts and desires of your heart. When examining yourself, being instant in prayer, you will discover that you did not fear, love, and trust in God as He demands; that you have not called upon God in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving so heartily and confidently as you should have done; that you have not properly heard and learned His Word and kept it sacred. You will find that you have not duly honored and obeyed your parents and superiors, but that you have been disobedient and discourteous toward them; that you have sinned against your neighbor by being angry, revengeful, and unforgiving; by entertaining unholy thoughts and desires; by showing envy, covetousness, and a sinful mind or by speaking slanderous words.

To sum up, you will come to know that you did not love your neighbor uprightly and heartily as yourself; rather, that self-love, quest for personal gain and honor, was the moving force of all your actions. Because of these and other sins you indeed have deserved God's wrath, temporal and eternal punishment, if God would deal with you strictly according to justice. From these sins that you notice in yourself you can infer how unclean and polluted your heart must be from which these sins flow; for the stream is no purer than its fountain, and by its fruits the tree is known. In this way you will come to a true knowledge of original sin.

Consider also the sins you do not know, but still have committed. They are far more numerous than those you do know. The omniscient God places all your sins in the light of His countenance. Knowing this, you certainly will be terrified in your conscience and experience sorrow and contrition for having offended your loving God so grievously and for having repaid His mercies with such dishonorable ingratitude.

The second part of repentance is faith, faith in Jesus Christ. It is He who has rendered full satisfaction for all your sins, procuring forgiveness of them all. Faith is, so to speak, the hand that appropriates forgiveness of sin and accepts it as an unmerited gift of divine grace. Without this faith all knowledge of sin and penitence over it is nothing but the repentance of a Cain and of a Judas and must end in despair. But by faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior of all sinners, the heart is comforted and satisfied. This faith, however, you cannot bring forth yourself; it is the work and gift of God the Holy Spirit. But if you feel that your faith is weak—you desire to believe, but you think

you cannot—then pray to God to strengthen this faith of yours, which is battling against doubt. He is willing to do so and surely will give you a stronger faith, so that you will overcome all the doubts which are troubling your soul.

If you come to confession with such a penitent and believing heart, you will rejoice in the absolution spoken by your pastor. For your sins are really and truly forgiven by God in heaven. Such forgiveness of sins Christ has procured for all sinners by the shedding of His blood and by His death, and by His resurrection He sealed it to them. This He commanded to preach throughout the world by means of the Gospel. Therefore when your pastor absolves you, he does nothing else than proclaim to you the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins. This, however, is not an empty announcement, but one actually offering and conveying the forgiveness of sins to the penitent sinner. Whenever, therefore, you hear your pastor pronounce absolution, do not doubt, but firmly believe, that your sins are forgiven before God in heaven. Believe it as firmly as though Christ were calling to you directly from heaven: "My son [My daughter], your sins are forgiven" (Matthew 9:2). For He says: "The one who hears you hears Me" (Luke 10:16); and: "If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven" (John 21:23).

Then the fruits of repentance are to follow. These consist in no longer knowingly and intentionally committing such sins as were forgiven you, but rather hating them, abstaining from them, and battling against them with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

## PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION ACCORDING TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

### The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

What or whom do I fear most?

In what or whom do I trust most for financial security, physical safety, or emotional support?

Do I fear God's wrath and therefore avoid every sin?

Is my love of God evident in my daily life?

Do I expect only good from God in every situation, or do I worry, doubt, complain, or feel unfairly treated when things go wrong?

### The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

Does the Gospel adorn my daily speech and conduct, or do I curse, speak carelessly, or misuse God's name?

Have I kept all the vows I have made in the Lord's Name?

Am I diligent and sincere in my prayers, or have I been lazy, bored or distracted? Do I trust that the Lord God will answer them according to His good and gracious will?

### The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Do I despise the Word by neglect or by paying little or no attention when it is read or preached?

Am I faithful in the Divine Service, or do I attend sporadically, preferring to be elsewhere when the Church is at worship?

Do I pray for my pastor and support his efforts to guard Christ's flock from error?

### The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

Do I submit to those whom God has put in authority over me?

Have I been ashamed of, angry, stubborn, or disrespectful toward my parents, teachers, employer, pastor, government or other authorities?

Do I obey all the laws of the city, state and country, and pay my rightful share of all taxes?

### **The Fifth Commandment**

You shall not murder.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

Have I unjustly taken the life of anyone, born or unborn?

Do I hate anyone, or am I angry with anyone?

Do I hold grudges or harbor resentment?

Am I abusive (in word or deed) toward my spouse, children, or anyone else?

Have I ignored the plight of the helpless or been callous toward genuine need?

### **The Sixth Commandment**

You shall not commit adultery.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

Have I held in highest regard God's gift of sexuality or have I debased it in any way by my thoughts, words or conduct?

Am I guilty of lust, indecency, or the use of pornography?

Have I reserved my sexual activity for the pleasure and consolation of my spouse, and when God wills, the procreation of children?

### **The Seventh Commandment**

You shall not steal.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

Have I gotten anything in a dishonest way?

Have I made illegal copies of any printed material, audio or video tapes, or computer programs?

Do I faithfully attend to the responsibilities of my vocation?

Do I take care of what I have, pay what I owe, return what I borrow, and respect other people's property?

Do I give generously, or am I selfish, stingy and greedy with my time and money?

### **The Eighth Commandment**

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

Do I speak the truth or have I lied in any way?

Do I gossip or take pleasure in talking about the faults and mistakes of others?

Do I uphold and defend the name and reputation of others?

Have I judged others without being duly authorized to do so?

Have I gladly and willingly found ways to explain in the best possible way the words or actions of those who hurt me?

Am I the first to admit my own mistakes, or

do I cover up my sins and make myself look better than I am?

### **The Ninth Commandment**

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

Do I have strong wants, desires, or cravings that consume my thoughts?

Do I resent or envy those who have more than I?

Do I neglect my marriage, family, church, and other relationships in a desperate attempt to satisfy the wants and desires of my flesh?

Have my wants kept me from being happy with and thankful for what God has given me?

### **The Tenth Commandment**

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

Am I discontent with the spouse the Lord God has given me?

Am I discontent with the job I have or the employees I supervise?

Have I neglected to urge someone to remain faithful to his or her spouse?

Have I wanted my neighbor's husband or wife, boyfriend or girlfriend, workers or property to be mine?

## **A PRAYER OF ONE PREPARING FOR CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner! Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light upon my path. It has laid bare my sin, for which I deserve nothing but punishment; yet, it has also declared to me Your grace and mercy and forgiveness.

As You have taught my heart to believe and trust in You, so shall I also confess with my mouth. Grant me the honesty to examine my life according to Your holy Ten Commandments, especially as they address my vocations in life. Discipline me as Your beloved child. Enable me to recognize my sin, to know and feel it in my heart, and rightly to bemoan and lament my iniquity and offenses. Give me both humility and

courage to confess my sins and to receive from my pastor Your Holy Absolution, according to Your good and gracious will. Invigorate my faith, through this same word of forgiveness, to have no doubt, but firmly to believe, that by it all my sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

You have called and sent my pastor, in Your name and stead, to hear my confession with Your ears of mercy, and to forgive me with Your own voice. Since You have chosen to deal with me in this way, allow me not to neglect Your gift but to lay hold of it with eager confidence. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and restore to me the joy of Your salvation; for Your Name's sake. Amen.

# INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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*You may prepare yourself by meditating on the Ten Commandments (pages 000–000). You may also pray the penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, or 143).*

*If you are not burdened with particular sins, do not trouble yourself or search for or invent other sins, thereby turning confession into a torture. Instead, mention one or two sins that you know and let that be enough.*

*When you are ready, kneel and say:*

**Pastor, please hear my confession and pronounce forgiveness in order to fulfill God's will.**

Proceed.

**I, a poor sinner, plead guilty before God of all sins.**

**I have lived as if God did not matter and as if I mattered most.**

**My Lord's name I have not honored as I should;  
my worship and prayers have faltered.**

**I have not let His love have its way with me,  
and so my love for others has failed.**

**There are those whom I have hurt, and those whom I have failed to help.  
My thoughts and desires have been soiled with sin.**

*If you wish to confess specific sins that trouble you, continue as follows:*

**What troubles me particularly is that . . .**

*Confess whatever you have done against the commandments of God,  
according to your own place in life.*

*The pastor may gently question or instruct you—not to pry or judge—but  
to assist in self-examination.*

*Then conclude by saying:*

**I am sorry for all of this and ask for grace. I want to do better.**

God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith.

**Amen.**

Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?

**Yes.**

Let it be done for you as you believe.

*The pastor places his hands on the head of the penitent and says:*

In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*The pastor may speak additional Scripture passages to comfort and strengthen the faith of those who have great burdens of conscience or are sorrowful and distressed.*

*The pastor concludes:*

Go in peace.

**Amen.**

*You may remain to say a prayer of thanksgiving. Psalms 30, 31, 32, 34, 103, or 118 are also appropriate.*

# PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

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## CHRISTIAN QUESTIONS WITH THEIR ANSWERS<sup>1</sup>

PREPARED BY DR. MARTIN LUTHER FOR THOSE WHO INTEND  
TO GO TO THE SACRAMENT

After confession and instruction in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the pastor may ask, or Christians may ask themselves these questions:

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|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>Do you believe that you are a sinner?</i><br/>Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.</li><li>2. <i>How do you know this?</i><br/>From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.</li><li>3. <i>Are you sorry for your sins?</i><br/>Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.</li><li>4. <i>What have you deserved from God because of your sins?</i><br/>His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation. See Romans 6:21, 23.</li><li>5. <i>Do you hope to be saved?</i><br/>Yes, that is my hope.</li><li>6. <i>In whom then do you trust?</i><br/>In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. <i>Who is Christ?</i><br/>The Son of God, true God and man.</li><li>8. <i>How many Gods are there?</i><br/>Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.</li><li>9. <i>What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?</i><br/>He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.</li><li>10. <i>Did the Father also die for you?</i><br/>He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.</li><li>11. <i>How do you know this?</i><br/>From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.</li></ol> |
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<sup>1</sup> The "Christian Questions with Their Answers," designating Luther as the author, first appeared in an edition of the Small Catechism in 1551.

12. *What are the words of institution?*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

13. *Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?*

Yes, I believe it.

14. *What convinces you to believe this?*

The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

15. *What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?*

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

16. *Why should we remember and proclaim His death?*

First, so we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

17. *What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?*

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2 and Ephesians 5.

18. *Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?*

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

19. *What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?*

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

20. *But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?*

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7.

Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15–16 and in 1 John 2 and 5.

Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.

### NOTE:

These questions and answer are no child's play, but are drawn up with great earnestness of purpose by the venerable and devout Dr. Luther for both young and old. Let each one pay attention and consider it a serious matter; for St. Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter six: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked."

## BRIEF INSTRUCTION FOR THOSE PREPARING FOR HOLY COMMUNION

### Why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?<sup>1</sup>

Each communicant should put this question to himself before he approaches the Table of the Lord. Many go to the Lord's Supper either quite thoughtlessly or with a wrong intention. Some go from mere force of habit; others only because their parents compel them to go; others again, because they consider it a meritorious deed to partake of the Lord's Supper; still others because they wish to acquire or retain before men the appearance and name of pious Christians. It is not surprising that such communicants derive no blessing from the Sacrament of the Altar but grow worse as time goes on.

A communicant who wishes to receive the Lord's Supper to his salvation must, in

the first place, fully realize what the Lord's Supper is and for what purpose it was instituted by Christ; and in the second place, he must be well prepared to receive it as a poor sinner who is yearning for forgiveness.

There are those who have an entirely wrong conception of the Holy Sacrament, who consider it merely an empty memorial, instituted only for the purpose of remembering the sufferings and death of Christ. Holy Communion is that exalted, blessed mystery by means of which Christ, in the consecrated bread, gives us His Body to eat and in the consecrated wine His blood to drink. This is the very body He assumed from the Virgin Mary and gave into death on the cross for the remission of our sins. It is true, we cannot see this with our eyes, taste it with our mouths, or grasp it with our

<sup>1</sup> Question 18, "Christian Questions with Their Answers," Luther's Small Catechism.

minds; but we are to believe it, for our Lord and Savior says: "Take, eat; this is My body. Drink of it, all of you; this is My blood." Our Savior is faithful and true, and He will certainly bring to pass what He has promised in the words of His statement. He is all-wise and knows ways and means to fulfill His promises, even though this is beyond our understanding. He also is almighty; with Him nothing is impossible. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. If we earnestly believe that we receive the true body and blood of our Savior—true God and man in one person—in Holy Communion, and not mere bread and wine, we shall then approach the Table of the Lord, not thoughtlessly and lightly, but in deepest reverence and humility of heart, saying as did the centurion, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof" (Luke 7:6).

The benefits derived from Holy Communion are threefold in nature. First, by worthily receiving Holy Communion we receive forgiveness of sins and the assurance that such forgiveness imparts. God, rich in love, has provided the means that poor sinners need to render them certain of the forgiveness of their sins. These means are the preaching of the Gospel, Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion. Do not be sinfully inquisitive, asking why God has instituted three means instead of one for the purpose of conveying to us the forgiveness of our sins and making us sure and certain of this, but rather thank Him for these rich provisions. He who knows from personal experience how hard it is for a soul under conviction of sin to believe that his sins are forgiven will realize the greatness of God's grace and providing care in giving us not merely one,

but several means of becoming certain of the forgiveness of sin. As surely therefore as you take the Lord's body into your mouth and drink the Lord's blood, shed for the remission of your sins, so certain you are to be of having forgiveness of sins, of being the undisputed possessor of this divine gift.

The second benefit of Holy Communion is life—not the natural life we received at birth and sustain by food and drink, but the new, spiritual life which begins in regeneration through Holy Baptism. It consists of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and in the love of God and our neighbor. Our Lord has designated His Holy Supper as a spiritual nourishment for the strengthening of this spiritual life. Of this Luther writes:

Holy Communion is aptly called a food for the soul, as it nourishes and strengthens the new man; for while we are born again by Baptism, man retains his old nature in his flesh and blood, and there are so many obstacles and temptations on the part of the devil and the world that we often grow faint and weary and at times even falter. So the Lord's Supper is given for a daily food and nourishment, that faith may be refreshed and strengthened and not repulsed in this battle, but ever grow stronger and stronger. The new life is of such a nature that it must constantly grow and progress. This new life has a great deal to endure, since the devil is an enemy who has great wrath. If he finds that he cannot take us by a bold stroke, he tries all his wiles, presents all his allurements, and does not stop until he has tired us out, so that we either abandon our faith or become listless and impatient. But when our heart is in

this condition, being about to succumb, we have the comfort that in this Sacrament it can be again strengthened and refreshed.<sup>2</sup>

The third benefit of Holy Communion is eternal salvation; for even as unforgiven sins bar us from heaven, so forgiveness of sins opens the door to eternal salvation. “For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.”

Now all depends on communing worthily and being well prepared in order to receive this threefold benefit. This, however, is not a worthiness according to the Law but according to the Gospel. It does not consist in absolute freedom from sin and perfection of life. Worthiness is realizing our unworthiness and sinfulness, in having a contrite heart that is spiritually poor, in earnestly desiring the forgiveness of sins, and in taking comfort in this forgiveness and depending solely on our Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, those are unworthy and ill prepared who either, in their conceit of self-righteousness, fancy they need no forgiveness of sins. Consider the Pharisee, who prayed: “Lord, I thank You that I am not like other men” (Luke 18:11). Consider also those who wholly despair of the forgiveness of sins, as did Cain, who said: “My punishment is greater than I can bear” (Genesis 4:13), and who will not let one relieve them of their thoughts of despair. There is another class of unworthy communicant, namely, those who persist in their wicked purposes and continue to serve sin knowingly or live in a state of relentless enmity with their neighbors.

Unworthy communicants going to

the Lord’s Supper also receive the body and blood of Christ, but they receive it in judgment and to their great damnation. For this very purpose St. Paul adds the earnest warning: “Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the [Lord’s] body eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28–29). Whoever recognizes in himself these marks of an unworthy communicant should not presume to go to the Lord’s Table in such condition. We do not mean that she should stay away permanently, but she should immediately repent and become a truly penitent sinner.

Are those of weak faith to be classed with the unworthy communicant? Not at all. It is these very guests who are welcome and belong at Christ’s Table. The Lord will surely not cast out those who are weak in faith and frail in their walk but who feel their weakness and desire to become stronger. These He invites, for it is for the weak and the frail that He instituted His Holy Supper, that they might gather strength from this spiritual food. To them He says: “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28), and again: “Whoever comes to Me I will never cast out” (John 6:37).

<sup>2</sup> LC V 23–27. See also *Concordia*, 434–35.



# PRAYERS FOR HOLY COMMUNION

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## PRAYER BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION

Lord Jesus Christ, You call to Yourself all those that labor and are heavy burdened, to refresh them and to give rest to their souls. Dear Lord, I pray, let me also experience Your love at the heavenly feast, which You have prepared for Your children on earth. Keep me from impenitence and unbelief, so that I do not receive the Sacrament to my damnation. Remove the spotted garment of my flesh and my own righteousness, and adorn me with the garment earned by Your blood. Strengthen my faith, increase my love and hope, and hereafter make me to sit at Your heavenly table, where You give me to eat of the eternal manna to drink of the river of Your pleasures. Hear me for Your own sake. Amen.

## PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Merciful Redeemer, You have fulfilled Your promise, "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). At Your Table I have received nourishment for my soul, the water of life in my weariness. By giving me, with the bread and the cup, Your body and Your blood, You have again said to me: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are Mine." You have wiped out all my sins and have put on me the garments of Your righteousness. Make me truly grateful for Your abundant love. Let the Sacrament be in me a power overcoming unbelief and doubt, conquering temptations and evil desires, and producing good works and humble service. Having been a guest at Your Table, help me to share the bread of life with my neighbors, so that they may share my joy and happiness. To You and the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory forever and ever. Amen

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- 3 September—Writing from John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*, Homily VII.
- 4 September—Writing from Leo the Great, *On the Feast of the Nativity, IV*, Sermon XXIV.6. Hymnody: Text copyright © 1941 Concordia Publishing House.
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- 15 December—Writing from Martin Luther, “Sermon at the Baptism of Bernhard von Anhalt (1540),” p. 318 in vol. 51 of *Luther’s Works*, American Edition, edited by John W. Doberstein, copyright © 1959 Augsburg Fortress Press. Used with permission.
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### Time of Easter: Addition

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10 February—Writing from John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*, Homily XXXVII.

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