

may receive with rejoicing the reward of my labor.” That labor comes with bearing the weight of the entire *manipulus* (the Latin root) in one’s charge: the congregation, the parish family of faith.

The *miter* (or *mitre*) has been the distinctive headdress of the Bishop since at least the ninth century. It has two stiffened rising sides coming to a point on top and worn at the front and



back. The sides are decorated. The miter may be white, or may match the color of the day or season.

The *cope* was adapted from the mantle worn in the first century. It is shaped like a cape and fastened in front by a clasp. It is worn over the alb or surplice. It is worn for Festival Matins and Vespers and may be worn in the Divine Service for the Procession and through the Service of the Word, being replaced by the chasuble before the Preface of the Service of the Sacrament.



The *dalmatic* is worn by the deacon in the Divine Service and Festival Matins and Vespers. Like the chasuble, it is put on over the head, but is loosely shaped to the body and has short sleeves.

Optional headdress include the *biretta* and the *zucchetto*. The *zucchetto* is a skullcap which is black for Pastors and Deacons and purple for Bishops. It is not worn by Pastors and Deacons during the services of the Church. (Bishops wear it in the service under the miter.) Like the *biretta*, its use dates to at least as early as the thirteenth century. The *biretta* is a stiff, four-cornered cap made of black (for Pastors and Deacons) or purple (for Bishops) material. It is only worn with other clerical vestments.



# THE LUTHERAN HERALD



OCTOBER 6–NOVEMBER 2, 2019

A PUBLICATION OF  
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN DIOCESE OF  
NORTH AMERICA

### *The Calendar*

October 6	Trinity 16
October 13	Trinity 17
October 18 (F)	St. Luke, Evangelist
October 20	Trinity 18
October 27	Trinity 19/Reformation (transferred)
October 28 (M)	St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles
October 31 (Th)	The Festival of the Reformation
November 1 (F)	All Saints' Day

### FROM THE BISHOP

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST,

Throughout September, I have continued my visitations of the diocese, beginning with Pastor Sullivan and the saints of Holy Cross Lutheran in Kerrville, Texas, and concluding the month with Pastor Mueller of Redeemer Lutheran Church (Cambridge, MN) and Pastor Ahonen (Good Shepherd, Tony, WI; Alpha & Omega Lutheran Mission, Winter, WI; Apologia Lutheran Mission, Deer Park, WI; and Peace Lutheran Church, Ironwood, MI). I also visited Pastor Daniel Mensing and the saints of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Tucson, Arizona, which recently separated from the Concordia Lutheran Conference. In October, I will be visiting Pastor Scheck and the saints of Christ Ev. Lutheran Church (Richmond, MO) and Pastor Henson and Deacon Harroun of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church (Herrin, IL). I am also scheduled to speak at the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual convention of the Mars Society, meeting in Los Angeles.

We are now less than a year away from the beginning of the second three-year period of instruction offered by St. Ignatius Lutheran Theological Seminary! I encourage men who are considering seminary study to make their intentions known to their pastor and contact me as soon as possible.

With the ongoing visitations and preparations underway for the resumption of seminary classes, please remember the

## Historic Vestments in the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America (Part 2)

**T**he *cincture* is worn about the waist of the alb; it is usually a white linen cord which is finished on the ends with tassels or knots. When the alb is worn over the cassock, a *sash* (either black for Pastors and Deacons or purple for Bishops) may be worn around the waist. The vesting prayer for the cincture is "Gird me about, O Lord, with the girdle of purity, and quench in my loins the passion of lust; that there may abide in me the virtue of continence and chastity."

The *stole* is a narrow band of cloth, preferably silk, worn around the neck over both shoulders (or, for Deacons, over one shoulder) and extending in length about to the knees. Stoles are made in the liturgical color of the day or season. They are usually embroidered. The vesting prayer for the stole is "Restore to me, O Lord, the stole of immortality which I lost in the transgression of my first parents; and although I am unworthy to draw near to Your holy Sacrament, yet may I be worthy of everlasting joy."

The *chasuble* is sometimes simply referred to as "the vestment." It is the distinctive vestment associated with the Lord's Supper. (Lang maintains that St. Paul refers to this garment in 2 Tim. 4:3.) The Gothic style is decorated with a Y-shaped orphrey cross in the back and a single orphrey, called the pillar, down the front. According to Lang, Luther retained the chasuble, and its use in Lutheran churches in Scandinavia and parts of Germany is well-attested. The vesting prayer for the chasuble is "O Lord, who has said, 'My yoke is easy and My burden is light,' make me so to be able to bear it that I may attain unto Your grace."

The *maniple* is a strip of cloth hung over the left arm above the wrist and resembles a stole in shape, and in the appropriate liturgical color of the day or season. It became part of the standard vestments by the sixth century at the latest, but it has largely fallen out of usage. The vesting prayer for the maniple is "May I be worthy, O Lord, to bear the maniple of tears and sorrow; that I

## Doctrine and Practice

### The Lutheran Rite

"Falsely are our churches accused of Abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained on our part, and celebrated with the highest reverence. All the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people. ...

The people are accustomed to partake of the Sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship. For none are admitted except they be first proved. The people are also advised concerning the dignity and use of the Sacrament, how great consolation it brings to anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe God, and to expect and ask of Him all that is good. This worship pleases God; such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion toward God."

(**Augsburg Confession, Article 24:1-2, 5-8**)

"But it can readily be judged that nothing would serve better to maintain the dignity of worship, and to nourish reverence and pious devotion among the people than that the ceremonies be rightly observed in the churches."

(**Augsburg Confession, Section 2:6**)

"In the beginning we must again make the preliminary statement that we do not abolish the Mass, but religiously maintain and defend it. For among us masses are performed every Lord's Day and on the other festivals, in which the sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments and other like things."

(**Apology [Defense] of the Augsburg Confession, Art. 24:1**)

"In the first place we assert, it is not now, nor has it ever been, in our mind to abolish entirely the whole formal *cultus* [worship service] of God, but to cleanse that which is in use, which has been vitiated by most abominable additions, and to point out a pious use. For this cannot be denied, that masses and the communion of bread and wine are a rite divinely instituted by Christ, which was observed, first under Christ Himself, then under the apostles, most simply and piously and without any additions."

**Martin Luther**

*Formula of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg (1523)*

needs for financial support of the diocese. If you would be willing to help, offerings can be sent to ELDoNA via the treasurer, Pr. Henson, at Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, 1000 North Park Ave. Herrin, IL 62948.

At the end of this issue of *The Lutheran Herald*, you will find the second portion of an ongoing series on the historic vestments of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. As we work for uniformity in all things, our diocese will strive for unity in such matters (Apology XXIV:1).

Repristination Press has now published Pastor Rydecki's translation of Pastor Wilhelm Löhe's *Handbook for the Home, School, and Church: for Christians of the Lutheran Confession (1845)*. This is the first time that this work has been published in translation in its entirety. (In the early days of Repristination Press, we published an abridged edition, translated by Rev. Edward T. Horn.)

Yours in Christ, Bishop Heiser

# Lesson from the Book of Concord The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

## ARTICLE III.

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

This article I cannot explain better than (as I have said) that it treats of Sanctification, viz. that thereby the Holy Ghost, with His office, is declared and set forth, namely, that He makes holy.

Therefore we must establish ourselves upon the word HOLY GHOST, because it is so precise and comprehensive that we cannot use another like it. For there are besides many kinds of spirits mentioned in the Holy Scriptures—the spirit of man, heavenly spirits and evil spirits. But the Spirit of God alone is called the Holy Ghost, that is, He which has sanctified and still sanctifies us. For as the Father is called Creator, the Son Redeemer, so the Holy Ghost, from His work, must be called Sanctifier, or one that makes holy. But what is the process of such sanctification? Answer: Just as the Son obtains dominion, whereby He redeems us, by His birth, death, resurrection, etc., so also the Holy Ghost effects our sanctification, as follows, namely, by the communion of saints or Christian Church, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body and eternal life; that is, He first leads us into His holy congregation, and places us in the bosom of the Church, whereby He preaches to us and brings us to Christ.

For neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe on Him and have Him for our Lord, except as it is offered to us and granted to our hearts by the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the Gospel. The work is finished and accomplished; for Christ, by His suffering, death, resurrection, etc., has acquired and gained the treasure for us. But if the work remained concealed, so that no one knew of it, they it were in vain and lost. That this treasure therefore might not lie buried, but be appropriated and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed, in which He gives the Holy Ghost to bring this treasure home and apply it to us. Therefore sanctification is nothing else but bringing us to Christ to receive this good, to which, of ourselves, we could not attain.

Learn then to understand this article most clearly. If you are asked: What do you mean by the words: “I believe in the Holy Ghost,” you can answer: I believe that the Holy Ghost makes me holy, as His name implies. But whereby does He accomplish this end? Or what are His means and method to this end? Answer: The Christian Church, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. For in the first place He has a peculiar congregation in the world, which is the mother that bears every Christian through the Word of God,

SATURDAY, NOV. 2: ZECHARIAH 8:1-23 19<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY A. TRINITY

We spent the week hearing from Nehemiah about the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Now Zechariah proclaims the promise of the Lord God, that He would cause the Israelites to dwell in the land once again. The Lord also restored the Gospel with the events begun on Reformation Day, and brought the people back to hear that we are forgiven for Christ’s sake, not according to our sinful works. The Church today also suffers violence. Many false doctrines exist in congregations, and openly manifest sins are allowed and praised.

In all these cases the Lord is faithful, and He helps His faithful remnant rebuild the broken walls and burned gates of the Church. Even though our Lord cares for His Church in the midst of her trials, the prophecy of Zechariah is about the eternal Church.

On the Last Day, our Lord God will take us out of this land of exile that we live in and bring us to the Promised Land of Heaven. We will no longer be sojourners and strangers in a foreign land. We will no longer endure the scorn and mockery of enemies who hate us. We will no longer carry the reproach of the nations against us. Our heavenly Father will welcome us into our heavenly abode, and for all eternity we will hear His Word, and thank and praise Him with all those who have gone before us in the faith.

We pray: O Almighty and Most Merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldst have done; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

What a glorious worship service we have in Nehemiah! For half the day they were in worship. The first one fourth of the day they heard the Word of God. The second one fourth of the day they spent in confession and worship of the Lord God. Can you imagine it? There are people today who get antsy when the Divine Service goes longer than an hour.

The reading from today shows us that such an attitude of disregard for the worship of the Lord is a shameful mockery of the good gifts that are distributed to us there. The people of Judah not only spent one fourth of the day listening to the Word of God, but they also spent one fourth of the day confessing their sins. They acknowledged that there was no good thing living in them if the Lord God was not their God.

Their prayer of confession goes through the history of the people of Israel, starting with Abram. Throughout the history of the Israelites one thing is shown to be true: the Lord God was faithful to His people, and the Israelites were unfaithful. For this reason, the Lord exiled them from the Promised Land, and sent them to Babylon. Such is the fate of all those who are faithless to God; they are cast out of His Promised Land into the Babylon of Hell. When in faith we confess our sins, as the Israelites did, our Lord restores us into His heavenly Kingdom.

We pray: O Almighty and Most Merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldst have done; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

which He reveals and preaches, and through which He illumines and enkindles hearts, that they understand and accept it, cling to it and persevere in it.

For where He does not cause it to be preached and made alive in the heart, so as to be understood, it is lost, as was the case under the Papacy, where faith was entirely put under a bushel, and no one recognized Christ as his Lord or the Holy Ghost as his Sanctifier, i.e. no one believed that Christ is our Lord in the sense that He has acquired this treasure for us, and, without our works and merit, made us acceptable to the Father. And what indeed was the cause? This, verily, that the Holy Ghost was not there to reveal it, and caused it to be preached; but men evil spirits were there, who taught us to obtain grace and be saved by our works. Therefore it is no Christian Church; for where Christ is not preached there is no Holy Ghost who makes, calls and gathers the Christian Church, without which no one can come to Christ the Lord. ...

The holy Christian Church the Creed denominates a communion of saints, for both expressions are taken together as one idea. But formerly the one point was not there, as it is also unintelligible in the translation. If it is to be given very plainly, it must be expressed quite differently. For the word ecclesia is properly an assembly. But we are accustomed to the word church, which the simple do not refer to an assembled multitude, but to the consecrated house or building. Although the house ought not to be called church, except for the reason that the multitude assembles there. For we who assemble constitute and occupy a particular space, and give a name to the house according to the assembly.

Everything therefore in the Christian Church is so ordered that we shall daily obtain free and full forgiveness of sin through the Word and signs, appointed to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live here. Thus, although we have sin, the Holy Ghost does not allow it to injure us, because we are in the Christian Church, where there is full forgiveness of sin, both in that God forgives us, and in that we forgive, bear with and help each other.

But outside of this Christian Church, where the Gospel is not, there is no forgiveness, as also there can be no sanctification. Therefore all who do not seek sanctification through the Gospel and the forgiveness of sin, but expect to merit it by their works, have expelled and severed themselves from the Christian Church.

These articles of the Creed, therefore, separate and distinguish us Christians from all other people upon earth. For all outside of Christianity, whether heathen, Turks, Jews or false Christians and hypocrites, although they believe in and worship only one true God, yet know not what His mind toward them is, and cannot confide in His love or expect any good from Him; therefore they abide in eternal wrath and damnation. For they have not the Lord Christ, and besides are not illumined and favored by the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

—The Large Catechism, §34–45, 47–48, 56, 66

Chapters 37 and 38 of the book of Jeremiah present what a faithful minister of the Lord looks like regarding the proclamation of God without compromise. No amount of persecution, verbal or physical, could persuade the prophet to alter the Lord's Word with either addition or subtraction. This is a powerful example for all who are blessed to bear the cross of the Office of the Ministry in Christ's Church, as well as for anyone who is blessed to be given the opportunity "to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

In today's text Jeremiah does nothing wrong, but yet is arrested, imprisoned, and persecuted with starvation rations—all because he dares to commit the offense of speaking God's Word of judgment against sinful rebellion and rejection of the Lord's divine proclamation. In the first few verses we see the prophet is forbidden to intercede for people intent on opposing God's will. This is valuable in battling the false belief of many today that if enough of us pray intently enough, we can bend God to our will, even if it is not aligned with His will. This horrible heresy causes us to focus on our desire and our heart, rather than the Lord's will and His Word. Such misconceptions about prayer are in direct contradiction of the words of the Lord's Prayer that proclaim "Thy will be done."

We pray: Almighty heavenly Father, allow us to see Your abundantly gracious hand in all things: every blessing and every trial. Through Your chosen Means of Grace comfort and strengthen us to boldly confess You before all, in all circumstances. Amen.

On this day we celebrate the Festival of the Reformation. This has always been a time for Lutherans to come together with one accord and confess the one, true doctrine of the Church. We rejoice today for the gift of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; that our salvation is found in Him alone, in His works and merits, and not in our works. Five hundred and two years ago, when Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Church in Wittenberg, the walls of the Church began to be rebuilt.

In Nehemiah, the walls of Jerusalem had just been finished. Now what? They gathered together and the Scriptures were read and explained to the people. They rested in the Word of God for seven days as they also celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. They had gathered in tents, as they learned was prescribed in the Law, gladly heard the Word, and rejoiced that the walls of Jerusalem had been built.

We also gather this day to hear God's Word and to remember the days when the Gospel had been suppressed under the burden of the works of the Law. We rejoice that the Gospel has been illuminated once again in our midst—the walls of Jerusalem have been built through the light of the Gospel. We give thanks for the grace and mercy of our Lord, that He fills our ears with good news that our sins have been forgiven for Christ's sake.

We pray: O Almighty and Most Merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldst have done; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The enemies of Judah did not want to see the city of Jerusalem rebuilt. They rejoiced in its destruction. When they saw that the wall of the city was being built, this angered them even further. Therefore, they plotted to attack the people with the hope that the people would become discouraged and not seek to continue the work.

This was the same way it was at the time of the Reformation. When the Gospel had finally started being preached in all its sweetness, the enemies of the Gospel worked diligently to suppress it in any way they could. The Reformers found themselves under attack by “those who fain by craft and sword would wrest the Kingdom from” our Lord (TLH 261:1).

The battle cry went up, “Our God will fight for us.” Nehemiah arranged for half the people to work on the wall, while the other half held spears and were ready for battle. In their battle cry we see that they knew that they were not fighting the battle, but it was the Lord God who would fight for them.

The enemies of the Gospel still are trying to stop the walls of Jerusalem—the Church—from being built. We hold the spear of God’s Truth, and repel our enemies who wish to destroy the Church. Let us continue to preach the Word of God and administer the Sacraments, and so build up the walls of Jerusalem, for our God is a Mighty God who destroys our enemies before us.

We pray: O Almighty and Most Merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldst have done; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

In today’s chapter we see that those opposed to God’s Word will even attempt to murder those who dare to confess His divine Word of judgment upon rebellion and rejection of the Lord’s clear proclamation. This reality existed in the time of Jeremiah, at the time of Jesus, and still flourishes in our own time throughout the world, as well as even within our own country. This should not be a surprise to us, as our Lord foretold such as recorded in the Gospel of John, “the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God” (John 16:2).

In contrast to this dire situation related to those who confess the Lord’s clear Word to an unbelieving world, we also see in this chapter that no matter how bleak things may appear to the human senses, the Lord is always in control and has the will and means to facilitate delivery for His elect. God is able to deliver us from the most drastic of conditions and protect us from the most horrific of plans laid by those who hate His Word. Our Lord has the power and wisdom to use friend and foe alike for His good and gracious will toward those who love Him and keep His Word.

We pray: Thank You Lord for mercifully working through all persons and circumstances around us to fulfill Your will in our lives. Amen.



In today's reading regarding faith and how it should shape our daily lives, as well as future plans, it is especially critical that we study the first five verses of the chapter and understand the picture those verses paint. Israel is not going to survive as a nation--according to what human senses perceive and what the Lord prophesies through His chosen prophet Jeremiah--but these realities must be looked past within the context of God's prophetic Word that Israel will rise again from the ashes.

When Jeremiah's cousin arrives requesting that he perform the duty of a redeemer relative and purchase a piece of property in the territory already captured and controlled by the Chaldeans, Jeremiah heeds the Word of God, though it defies all human logic. The rest of the chapter presents the prophet's struggle of faith which pits the Word of God against human perception of the temporal realities surrounding him. This is no different than our daily existence in the world while faithfully following the Lord's clear prophetic Word to "not be of the world." Jeremiah's test of faith is handled the same way our test of faith should be handled: by hearing and trusting the Words of the Lord, as presented in the final verse of today's text, which records God's declaration of "for I will cause." The Lord causes all things to take place for the benefit of those who love Him and keep His Word.

We pray: Almighty heavenly Father, allow us to see Your divine wisdom and control in all things; in every support of body and soul, as well as in every test of faith. Amen.

At the beginning of yesterday's reading we heard that Nehemiah received the report from his home land in the month of Chislev. That month corresponds to our months of November and December, and it is the ninth month for the Israelites. The events of today's reading take place in the month Nisan, which corresponds to our March and April, and is the first month for the Israelites, the month of the Passover.

Nehemiah had told us yesterday that he had fasted and prayed "many days." This is now four months later. He had fasted and prayed for four months the prayer that he prayed in yesterday's reading. Four months of contrition. Four months of sorrow over his sins and the sins of the people of Israel. Four months of begging the Lord God Almighty for mercy. Finally, through King Artaxerxes the Lord grants to Nehemiah that the city of Jerusalem would be rebuilt.

As we soon commemorate the Reformation, we are reminded that "though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us...they shall not overpower us" (TLH 262:3). For even though the Church is beset with much false doctrine and openly manifest sinfulness, wherever faithful preachers continue to preach the Word of God in its purity and administer the Sacraments according to Christ's institution, the Lord is rebuilding the broken walls of the Church and restoring the Gospel to His people. Even as He rebuilt the temple of His Body and gave us a mercy seat to cling to in faith.

We pray: O Almighty and Most Merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldst have done; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



**MONDAY, OCT. 28: NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 19<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY A. TRINITY**

Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah, asks Hanani, one of his fellow Israelites for a report on what was happening back in his home land of Israel while he was in the land of Babylon. The Israelites had been given permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra, but this was not going well, because the enemies of Israel were making it difficult. The report was that it was not going well.

Spiritually this is a picture of the Church in this world. Because of our spiritual enemies—the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh—the Church is in great distress and reproach. The walls of the Church seem broken down by the existence of false doctrine, and her gates are burned with the fire whenever unrepentant sinfulness is not only allowed, but encouraged.

What is Nehemiah's response to this report? He fasts and prays for many days, offering up a prayer of confession for his sins and the sins of the Israelites. In his contrition he pleads to the only One who can offer mercy. In his faith he clings to the One who can restore the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

In these dark times when the Church is beset with so many slings and arrows it behooves us to confess daily our sins, and ask our heavenly Father to guide and protect His Church from all of the assaults of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh.

We pray: O Almighty and Most Merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready, both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldst have done; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**THURSDAY, OCT. 10: JEREMIAH 39:1-18 16<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY A. TRINITY**

Today's text for meditation presents the conclusion of Jeremiah's prophetic message of judgment on Israel, her capital, and her king—while also presenting the grace of God, bestowed upon those who cling to Him and His Word, especially in times of trial. Chapter 39 is delivered in a setting of fulfilled prophecy; Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonian army, Zedekiah the king was taken in chains to Babylon, and the citizens of Jerusalem and Judah were carried into exile, with the exception of some of the poorest people. However, God did not only carry out His threats; He also kept His promise to be with His prophet "to deliver" him.

Jeremiah, previously imprisoned, is rescued and entrusted to Gedaliah, the newly appointed governor, and allowed to continue his prophetic ministry in the midst of the people. Ebed-melech was delivered from the sword also, demonstrating that God did not fail to do for this faithful Ethiopian what He did for His prophet. This is a valuable lesson for the Lord's people of today to learn as we navigate the many challenges of modern American life where, though we are not besieged by the Babylonian army, we are under constant assault from the devil, the world, and our own fallen flesh. The Lord will never forsake those who faithfully look to Him for their deliverance by His grace.

We pray: Lord, through the witness of Your holy Means of Grace, may we always be drawn closer to You in an ever increasing faithfulness as Your servants. Amen.

Today's text presents a number of valuable lessons for God's chosen people, who must be in the world, but not of the world. Jeremiah tells those who are already exiled to Babylon that the continued welfare of that nation will determine their own well-being so directly that they should pray to the Lord on its behalf.

There is a powerful Gospel message of hope in God's plans for the future of His exiled people. However, this grace filled outcome manifests itself only after many years of God-directed discipline to produce the desired fruit (repentance) in their lives. They would again turn to the Lord with all their heart, and He would keep His promise to bring them back to their homeland.

Coupled with this brief assurance of eventual deliverance is a denunciation of the prophets who, at home and abroad, deny the necessity of repentance to avert God's judgment on an apostate nation. This too is a valuable lesson for us who live in an age of extreme "tolerance". The world, and sadly many in churches, declares all things are permissible and that no one should be made to feel shame or guilt for anything—no matter how at odds with God's Word and will the behavior might be.

Jeremiah presents the reality in this chapter that we can flourish in an adverse environment if the Lord's will and Word are utmost in our lives, and we are willing to submit to them in a state of repentance.

We pray: May the Holy Spirit mercifully strengthen our faith while restraining the old man in us, that the new man may come forth in repentance and faithfulness. Amen.

## Lesson from the Book of Concord The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

### Article IV.

Also they teach, that men cannot be Justified before God by their own strength, merits or works, but 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, who, by His death, hath made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

—Augsburg Confession

Based on Luther's four-fold aspect of better understanding God's Word:

God reveals about Himself how He delivers (or protects) His servants as He brings them to point to Christ (who is the fulfillment of the offering—carefully weighed out to be the perfect offering). It is also revealed that He is long-suffering (patient) with man, allowing man time to be brought to repentance.

The believing, baptized children of God can be thankful for God's patience; and for God's continual pursuit of us—namely, breaking and hindering every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature—to bring us to repentance. Thankfulness can also be given for His pursuit of us in delivering forgiveness of sins through His means of grace.

The sins uncovered could include our old nature's endless pursuit of its sinful will being done; for believing that it isn't offensive to God to expect Him to bend His will so that our will would be done; and for believing that we are not that bad.

We are taught to pray for mercy; for a hunger and thirst for Christ's righteousness; and an understanding that such a hunger is created and sustained through God's Divine Service of Word and Sacraments, which point to Christ Jesus' fully atoning merits!

We pray: 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. Amen.

The opening chapter, especially the opening verses, present the stark reality of captivity by an enemy nation. Names are changed, which is meant to force allegiance to a new lifestyle and a new belief system. Additionally, the daily habits of the young captives are controlled right down to what type of food and drink they have available. The provisions which are prescribed contradict Jewish dietary rules, so Daniel and his companions are faced with a choice of challenging their captors, or compromising their faith.

Daniel remains faithful to God's instructions, and he and his companions who also remain faithful are rewarded for their steadfast faith with keenness of mind that allows them to excel far beyond their peers. The Lord uses this grace-filled gift of exceptional intelligence to bring these faithful servants to the attention of greater authorities, which in turn brings them to the attention of king Nebuchadnezzar himself.

This historic narrative presents the reality that the Lord can use any circumstance to fulfill His will, and His chosen people should always strive to flourish wherever the Lord's will has placed them in the world. While attempting to thrive in adversity though, the believer must be careful to not compromise his adherence to the Lord's will and Word. These facts or lessons will run throughout the entire book of Daniel and serve as a sure guide for all believers of all time.

We pray: Heavenly Father, through Your abundant grace may we never be found compromising the true faith in our lives, or among our brethren. Amen.

# Lesson from the Book of Concord

## The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

### The Third Commandment.

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

When, then, it is asked: “What is meant by the commandment: ‘Remember the sabbath-day to sanctify it’?” Answer: To sanctify the Sabbath is the same as “to keep it holy.” But what is meant by “keeping it holy”? Nothing else than to be occupied in holy words, works and life. For the day needs no sanctification for itself; for in itself it has been created holy. But God desires it to be holy to thee. Therefore it becomes holy or unholy on thy account, according as thou art occupied on the same with things that are holy or unholy.

How then does such sanctification occur? Not that we sit behind the stove and do no rough work, or deck ourselves with a garland and put on our best clothes, but (as has been said) that we occupy ourselves with God’s Word, and exercise ourselves therein.

And indeed we Christians ought always to keep such a Sabbath, and to be occupied with nothing but holy things, i.e. daily to meditate upon God’s Word, and carry it in our hearts and upon our lips. But because (as has been said) we do not all have leisure, we must devote several hours a week to the young, or at least a day to the mass of people, in order that we may be concerned about this alone, and especially urge the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, and thus direct our whole life and being according to God’s Word. The Sabbath is truly kept whenever time is devoted to earnest attention to this, and the practice of it; but that cannot be called a true Christian Sabbath where this is not done. For they who are not Christians can keep holiday and be idle just as well as the entire swarm of our ecclesiastics, who stand daily in the churches, singing, and ringing bells, but who keep no Sabbath day holy, because they neither preach nor practice God’s Word, but teach and live contrary to it.

For the Word of God is the sanctuary above all sanctuaries, yea, the only one which we Christians know and have. For though we had the bones of all the saints, or all holy and consecrated garments upon a heap, they would not avail us anything; for all that is a dead thing which can sanctify nobody. But God’s Word is the treasury which sanctifies everything whereby even all the saints themselves were sanctified. —The Large Catechism, §87–90

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25: EZRA 7:1-28      18<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY A. TRINITY

Based on Luther’s four-fold aspect of better understanding God’s Word:

God reveals about Himself how He works through many generations to have His will carried out; that He works through the servants of His Word to prepare hearts by catechesis. Proper teaching of God’s Word brings about a love for God’s house, and a freedom to do good, according to His will.

The believing, baptized children of God can be thankful that God has worked through many generations of people whom we will never know, contributing to God’s Word being taught to us properly; and that God’s Word and Sacraments have brought us to have a love of His house where He comes to us.

The sins uncovered could include failure to appreciate God’s gift of pastors who have gone through training to teach God’s Word and manage God’s Sacraments properly. Also, that there is no concern to care for (including financially support) the house of the Lord (be it a sanctuary or house) in which He comes to us.

We are taught to pray for mercy; and for a heart that continues to be brought to repentance and belief—prepared by God’s Word of Law and Gospel—with a love for His house and a desire to benefit our neighbor.

We pray: 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. Amen.

Based on Luther's four-fold aspect of better understanding God's Word:

God reveals about Himself that He always accomplishes His will when it comes to the message of His promised Gospel, being fulfilled in the Messiah (the Christ), as the temple points toward Jesus. He is the God of order, and He is the only One who brings true joy, as the sacrifices and Feast of Unleavened Bread bring the joyful remembrance of escape from slavery.

The believing, baptized children of God can be thankful that God works through His Holy Word and Sacraments, continually bringing His Gospel message of promised deliverance through the fully atoning merits of Christ Jesus; and that He brings us to have true spiritual understanding (escape through faith alone in Christ's merits), which brings rejoicing.

The sins uncovered could include how our sinful flesh regards the means God chooses to work through (His Word and Sacraments) as weak and nothing special; that His efforts are taken for granted or purposely disregarded; and that our flesh finds joy in what we want to determine as powerful and special.

We are taught to pray for mercy; and for on-going spiritual understanding of, and desire to receive, God's Holy Word (properly proclaimed) and His Holy Sacraments (administered according to Christ's institution).

We pray: 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. Amen.

The account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego has long been one of the most beloved of 'Bible stories' in the Old Testament, being favored by Sunday School teachers for generations. But it is worth careful reflection on the profound lesson which is being taught to all generations of the Church. When our Lord says in Matthew 22: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's," (v. 21) this account helps to define the limits of such obedience.

Nebuchadnezzar had given an instruction which he decreed was universally binding on all the people, nations, and languages under his authority that they were to worship the idol which he had established. Arguably, he cared nothing regarding any other religious beliefs all these people had; but he decreed death for any and all who would not worship the idol as he commanded.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego scornfully reject his authority in this matter: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." The magistrate has no authority to command that which is contrary to the divine Word.

We pray: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The dream which the Lord caused Nebuchadnezzar to dream and Daniel to interpret is a warning against the hubris of the governing authorities. Daniel declares to the king: “They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.” This prophetic dream and its interpretation was given to warn the king to repent: “Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

Nebuchadnezzar learned this lesson in the fulness of time after he had endured all that was promised in the prophetic dream. The king had dared to declare: “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?” Thus it was necessary that he be humbled in the way which the Lord declared would transpire. When the king had been restored, he spoke the truth: “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.”

We pray: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

Based on Luther’s four-fold aspect of better understanding God’s Word:

God reveals about Himself that He carries out His will by bringing some to be faithful and persistent. He works through specific servants in various roles in order to accomplish His will of focusing men on Christ (at the time of Ezra it was the Prophets; today those specific servants are Pastors).

The believing, baptized children of God can be thankful for God never changing; that He is long-suffering (has patience); and that He creates faithfulness in His followers, even amidst an ever-resistant culture. More thankfulness can be given because He works through ordained pastors, equipping them with His means of grace, in order to deliver forgiveness, life, and salvation.

The sins uncovered could include doubting God’s providence; devaluing His servants who are ordained to carry out His work; and despising the meditation of God’s Word (considering it boring, while valuing worldly matters as more interesting and more important).

We are taught to pray for mercy; for more trust; for ongoing patience; for a right appreciation toward the servants that He uses in delivering what He intends (namely, forgiveness, life, and salvation through His Word and Sacraments); and for a proper recognition of (and true desire to be fed with) His sacred means of grace.

We pray: 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. Amen.

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22: HAGGAI 1:1-15 18<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY A. TRINITY**

Based on Luther's four-fold aspect of better understanding God's Word:

God reveals about Himself that He is fully aware of what our self-centered sins are against Him. The Lord rebukes where He needs to in order to open sinful man's eyes to his sin. And He is the One who creates the repentant response.

The believing, baptized children of God can be thankful for God's Law, which brings us to see our sins against Him (tearing down any trust in the flesh); and for bringing us to have the biblical wisdom of fearing the Lord. More thankfulness can be given for His Gospel, which reveals Christ's fully atoning merits (our only rescue) and for bringing us to trust alone in the blood of Christ for redemption.

The sins revealed could include thinking only about material gain for oneself, while properly supporting the proclamation of God's Gospel falls by the wayside, as well as believing that it's not a problem to place God's commands out of mind.

We are taught to pray for an on-going fear of the Lord; for understanding that the riches of Christ's fully atoning merits—delivered through Word and Sacrament Ministry, and received through faith—brings us to become rich in our love for God and others.

We pray: 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. Amen.

**WEDNESDAY, OCT. 16: DANIEL 5:1-30 17<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY A. TRINITY**

Belshazzar learned nothing from the experience of Nebuchadnezzar before him; in fact, his hubris was even worse. The judgment of the Triune God befell his kingdom because of his contemptuous misuse of the sacred vessels of the temple. In the words of Daniel: "And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house 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, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified." Belshazzar did this despite knowing what befell Nebuchadnezzar: "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this."

In the political calculations of men, the rise and fall of nations is understood through a dizzyingly complex web of explanations. And such explanations may offer a measure of truth—at least in terms of considering the instrumentality which the Lord of heaven and earth uses to shape the affairs of men. But today's reading teaches us that the seemingly-sudden downfall of one of the most powerful kingdoms in human history is properly understood in light of the divine ordering of all things in this world.

We pray: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.



**THURSDAY, OCT. 17: DANIEL 5:31–6:28 17<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY A. TRINITY**

The Lord so willed that the influence of Daniel endured the fall and rise of kingdoms, so that when Darius the Mede came to power, no fault could be found with Daniel's administration of those secular matters which had been entrusted to his care. His political opponents used his religious convictions against him, and criminalized his faithfulness to the Lord in an effort to use secular might against him.

The reading is a powerful reminder of the way in which the governments of this world will misuse the authority which has been granted to them in a perverse assault on the faithful. They were jealous of Daniel's authority, and so they outlawed his religious practices in an endeavor to destroy him.

Darius was not a man like Belshazzar; clearly he was filled with dread at the manipulation of his power by wicked men pursuing their own purposes. Knowledge of their plot did not annul the king's commandment. But, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, Daniel trusted in the Lord, and the Lord delivered him. And the enemies of faithful Daniel paid the price for their treachery without Daniel doing so much as lifting a hand against them. We are secure in the hands of the Lord.

We pray: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 21: EZRA 4:1-24 18<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY A. TRINITY**

Based on Luther's four-fold aspect of better understanding God's Word:

God reveals about Himself that He knows rejection and resistance will happen towards Him and, thus, His followers should prepare for it as well. As God exhorts throughout His Word, He expects faithfulness to Him alone and, therefore, known mixing with adversaries is forbidden.

The believing, baptized children of God can be thankful that He brings about a focused devotion to Him, such that any teaching that goes against His Word gets rejected. More thankfulness can be given for His creating the strength to refuse any acknowledgment of false beliefs as acceptable.

The sins revealed could include not standing against any false teaching of God's Word; believing that the prayers of others (to false gods) are acceptable and somehow meaningful; thinking that mingling Christianity alongside false gods isn't that big of a deal; and believing that not following God's Word, or not being holy is acceptable (or excusable).

We are taught to pray for mercy; for strength and a steadfast faith; and for patience in adversity. We are also brought to pray to be fed by God's Word and Sacraments, and thus focused on Christ and His fully atoning merits; and for receiving a declaration of forgiveness of sins and justification (being accounted holy and righteous) through faith alone.

We pray: 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. Amen.

repentance or reproof, but properly nothing else than a preaching of consolation, and a joyful message which does not reprove or terrify, but against the terrors of the Law consoles consciences, points alone to the merits of Christ, and again comforts them by the precious preaching of the grace and favor of God, obtained through Christ's merit.

7. As to the revelation of sin, because the veil of Moses hangs before the eyes of all men as long as they hear the bare preaching of the Law, and nothing concerning Christ, and therefore do not learn from the Law to perceive their sins aright, but either become presumptuous hypocrites as the Pharisees, or despair as did Judas; Christ takes the Law into His hands, and explains it spiritually (Matt. 5:21 sqq.; Rom. 7:14). And thus the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all sinners (Rom. 1:18), how great it is; by this means they are instructed in the Law, and then from it first learn to know aright their sins—a knowledge to which Moses never could coerce them.

Therefore, although the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ, the Son of God, is an earnest and terrible proclamation and declaration of God's wrath, whereby men are for the first time led aright to the Law, after the veil of Moses has been removed from them, so that they first know aright how great things God in His Law requires of us, nothing of which we can observe, and therefore should seek all our righteousness in Christ—

8. Yet, as long as all this (namely, Christ's suffering and death) proclaims God's wrath and terrifies man, it is still not properly the preaching of the Gospel, but the preaching of Moses and the Law, and therefore a "strange work" of Christ, whereby He attains His proper office, i.e. to preach grace, console and quicken, which is properly the preaching of the Gospel.

#### **Negative.**

##### ***Contrary Doctrine which is Rejected.***

Therefore we reject and regard incorrect and injurious the dogma that the Gospel is properly a preaching of repentance or reproof, and not alone a preaching of grace. For thereby the Gospel is again converted into a law, the merit of Christ and the Holy Scriptures obscured, Christians robbed of true consolation, and the door opened again to the Papacy.

—The Formula of Concord, Epitome

**FRIDAY, OCT. 18: EZRA 1:1–11**

**17<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY A. TRINITY**

"King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods; and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah."

The articles of the house of the Lord survived the rise and fall of kingdoms. The Lord had promised to bring His people back to the land promised to Abraham; all things would be accomplished according to the Word of the Lord, who promised that in the fulness of time redemption would come through the Son of David.

The articles of the Lord's house, and the people of Judah and Benjamin were preserved according to the promise of the Lord, and in time—through the instrumentality of King Cyrus—the people were restored to Judah and to Jerusalem, along with compensation to allow them to rebuild a life in the land. Thus the king decreed: "And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem." The people had no strength to establish such things for themselves; but the will of the Lord established it all, so that the Word of God would be fulfilled in the sight of the nations.

We pray: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

Joy and sadness were commingled at the restoration of the worship of the Lord in Jerusalem: “But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers’ houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.”

Those who had known the glory of the Lord’s house in the days of old were saddened to see what was to stand in the place of the glories of Solomon’s temple. But the cause for rejoicing was far greater, for it was to this temple that the Lord incarnate would come to accomplish the salvation of His people.

Though the earthly glory of the Church is not what it was in ages past, still the Lord preserves His Church against the assaults of the evil one. Though we may weep over the fallen spires of the cathedrals of old, still the Lord continues to uphold His saints, and gathers them together to receive His means of grace. The gates of hell will not prevail against the Church.

We pray: Lord, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

## Lesson from the Book of Concord The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

### Chapter V. Of the Law and the Gospel.

#### Statement of the Controversy.

Whether the preaching of the Holy Gospel be properly not only a preaching of grace, which announces the forgiveness of sins, but also a preaching of repentance and censure, rebuking unbelief, which is rebuked not in the Law, but alone through the Gospel.

#### Affirmative.

##### *Pure Doctrine of God’s Word.*

1. We believe, teach and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the Church as an especially brilliant light, whereby, according to the admonition of St. Paul, the Word of God may be rightly divided.

2. We believe, teach and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, which teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and reproves everything that is sin and contrary to God’s will.

3. Therefore everything that reproves sin is and belongs to the preaching of the Law.

4. But the Gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the Law, and therefore is condemned by it, should believe, viz. that Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sins, and, without any merit of theirs [no merit of the sinner intervening], has obtained and acquired forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.

5. But since the term “Gospel” is not used in one and the same sense in the Holy Scriptures, on account of which this dissension originally arose, we believe, teach and confess that if by the term “Gospel” the entire doctrine of Christ be understood, which He proposed in His ministry, as also did His apostles (in which sense it is employed, Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21), it is correctly said and written that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and of the forgiveness of sins.

6. But if the Law and the Gospel be contrasted with one another, as Moses himself is called a teacher of the Law, and Christ a preacher of the Gospel, we believe, teach and confess that the Gospel is not a preaching of