

Three months before, the angel Gabriel appeared to the blessed Virgin Mary and proclaimed that she was highly favored for she would give birth to the Savior of the world. Now on this day, the eighth day after St. John the Baptist was born, the day of his circumcision and naming, we hear of when the Virgin Mary greeted Elizabeth and the baby John, being only six months in the womb of his mother, leaped for joy at the arrival of his Lord and Savior Jesus, the Christ, who was in the womb of blessed Mary.

The prophet Isaiah speaks about the work of our Savior. The Lord gives power to the weak. He gives might to those who lack strength. They shall run and not grow weary. They shall walk and not faint. This is what faith produces. It renews that which has been destroyed by sin. This is the purpose for which our Lord Jesus came into the world. This is the reason why St. John leaps for joy. This gift is for all the world. It is for all those who cling in faith to the works and merits of the Christ. He never grows faint or weary in His work of redemption for us.

Prayer: Almighty God, Who hast dealt wonderfully with Thy handmaiden, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and hast chosen her to be the mother of Thy Son, and hast graciously made known that Thou regardest the poor and lowly and the despised: Grant us grace in all humility and meekness to receive Thy Word with hearty faith, and so to be made one with Thy dear Son; Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

THE LUTHERAN HERALD



“COME, HOLY GHOST, GOD AND LORD!”—LUTHER’S HYMN FOR PENTECOST, FROM ITS FIRST PUBLICATION IN THE FIRST LUTHERAN HYMNAL (1524).

JUNE 6–JUNE 4, 2022

**A PUBLICATION OF
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NORTH AMERICA**

The Calendar

The Lutheran Hymnal (1941): TLH; *The Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (1912): ELHB;
The Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary (1913): ELH

(Monday: M; Tuesday: T; Wednesday: W; Thursday: R; Friday: F; Saturday: S)

Pentecost/St. Boniface, Bishop and Martyr	TLH 224/TLH 494
June 8 (W) Ember Wednesday in Pentecost	
June 10 (F) Ember Friday in Pentecost	
June 11 (S) Ember Saturday in Pentecost	
June 12 Feast of the Holy Trinity	TLH 247
June 15 (W) David Henkel, Pastor and Confessor	TLH 472
June 19 Trinity 1	TLH 393
June 24 (F) The Nativity of St. John the Baptist	TLH 292
June 25 (S) The Presentation of the Augsburg Confession	TLH 267
June 26 Trinity 2	ELHB 277
June 29 (W) St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles	TLH 466
July 2 (S) The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	TLH 275

ST. IGNATIUS SEMINARY UPDATE—The Summer Intensives begin on June 6. The classes this quarter are as follows:

- E009—Greek Readings 4 (1 hr.)
- P003—Liturgics Practicum II (1 hr.)
- S006—Eschatology (1 hr.)
- H005—Renaissance (2 hrs.)
- E007—Galatians (2 hrs.)
- S007—Office of the Ministry and Ecclesiology (3 hrs.)

Seminary Intensives will run through July 8.

SUPPORT FOR ST. IGNATIUS SEMINARY—The work of the seminary is of critical importance for the ongoing purpose of this diocese, preparing future pastors to serve in congregations of our fellowship. In the past year, there has been a significant decrease in financial support for St. Ignatius.

FRIDAY, JULY 1: MATTHEW 7:15–23 2ND SUNDAY A. TRINITY

Earlier in chapter seven our Lord Jesus warned us about giving things that are holy to dogs, or casting our pearls before swine. These trample sacred things under their feet, and turn and tear us to pieces (verse 6). The corruption of dogs and swine is easily seen. They show themselves to be against the truth of the Word of God openly and outwardly. They are openly hostile to the truth of the Word of God. Today, our Lord warns us about a different type of animal, the wolf.

Wolves are not openly hostile. They hide themselves. They come to us in sheep's clothing. They appear to be friends and neighbors. They appear to be loving and open. Inside, however, they are ravenous wolves, who are sent by the devil to rend and tear those who would be deceived by their lies. They rend and tear people away from the truth of the Word of God by deception, and not openly like dogs and swine.

We should remain vigilant against dogs, swine, and wolves. A good tree shows itself by its fruit. A good tree will preach the truth and purity of the Lord God's Word. A good tree will administer the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. A good tree will warn against the dogs, swine, and wolves, and direct us to the only source of our salvation, our Lord Jesus, the Christ.

Prayer: O Lord, who never failest to help and govern those whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love, make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Triune Lord God created the Heavens and the Earth. He created all things by His Word. Man, He created with His own hands from the dust of the earth. He breathed into Him the breath of life. He created him in His own image. But mankind disobeyed the Lord God and corrupted that image. They became slaves to sin, death, and the devil. In order to redeem us slaves from our evil masters, the Lord God became flesh and dwelt among us. He came into the prison house to free the prisoners, and give sight to the blind.

Our Lord Jesus took upon Himself our flesh in order to redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. He was born of the blessed Virgin Mary, an ancestor of King David. Our Lord was the Son of David, and He suffered and died on the tree of the holy cross for the atonement of the whole world. Even though He was born among the people of Israel, He did not come to bring salvation for only the Jewish people. He came to redeem all mankind, all the slaves to sin and death. He became a Light to enlighten the Gentiles. He became our Light and Life. He has freed us from the bonds of prison. He has placed His name on us in holy Baptism, and made us a part of His eternal Kingdom, restoring the image that was lost.

Prayer: O Lord, who never failest to help and govern those whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love, make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

While the seminary has sufficient reserves to continue its work for several years, it is important that we do not deplete these reserves. If you would be willing to help provide such support, it can be sent to ELDoNA via the treasurer, Rev. Michael Henson, Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church 1000 North Park Ave. Herrin, IL 62948

REPORT ON THE 2022 SYNOD AND COLLOQUIUM—A report from the bishop regarding developments at, and following, the recent synod has been provided to clergy of the diocese.

SUMMER VISITATIONS—Bishop Heiser will be conducting many of his visitations between July 6 and July 18. Please consult your pastor for details regarding local visitations.

THE COMMON SERVICE—THE ENGLISH LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION—Bishop Heiser’s presentation on the history of the divine service is being published.

2022 SUPPLEMENT FOR THE AUGUSTANA SERVICE BOOK AND HYMNAL—A draft of the 2022 Supplement was provided to all clergy in attendance at the Synod; copies have been mailed to those clergy who were unable to attend. Final additions are being made to the Supplement, which contains (among other items) a ‘draft’ of the diocesan “Common Service”; a text of the Small Catechism; the Propers for all Sundays, Feasts, and Festivals; and proposed Office Hymns for all Sundays of the Church Year. The Supplement may be used as desired in congregations affiliated with the diocese. This helps the committees evaluate these resources and provides useful feedback for further development. The finished Supplement will be available as soon as feasible.

Lesson from the Book of Concord Pentecost Sunday

THE THIRD ARTICLE.

Of Sanctification.

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.

What is meant by this Article?

Answer. I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the gospel, enlightened me by His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith; in which Christian Church He daily forgives abundantly all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and will raise up me and all the dead at the last day, and will grant everlasting life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.

—The Small Catechism, Part II

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29: MAT. 5:33–37 STS. PETER AND PAUL

Faith removes the need for swearing an oath. It establishes the truth in the dealings of our life, for faith is a gift of God. When someone has been given faith through the work of the Holy Ghost, he trusts that the Lord will work out the troubles and concerns of his life in a way that will benefit him. When one trusts that the Lord will act on his behalf, there is no need for lies or deception. He can simply trust that the Lord will order things for his good.

With faith in the Lord God, yes is yes and no is no. The truth of the Word of God will always be truthful. The lies of those who desire to deceive about what the Word says will still be lies, no matter how much they try to dress it up in eloquence. We do not need to swear an oath in order to make God's Word true. It is true with or without our oath. This is why we can simply trust that when our Lord tells us that His redemption gives forgiveness, life, and salvation to those who cling to Him, we can say "Amen, yes, it is so."

Prayer: O Almighty God, Who by Thy Son Jesus Christ, didst give to Thy holy Apostles many excellent gifts, and commandedst them earnestly to feed Thy flock: Make, we beseech Thee, all Pastors diligently to preach Thy holy Word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The selections from the Book of Concord for the Sundays of the Church Year are from H. E. Jacobs' translation of the Book of Concord, and are taken from the table of suggested lessons for Sundays and Festivals of the Church. (The table of appropriate lessons was originally found in Pipping's Christliches Concordienbuch [Leipzig, 1734].)

On a mountain sat a fortified city. This city was a strength to the poor and needy. It gave refuge from storms. It provided shade from the heat of the day. But this city became a ruin. Foreigners razed it to the ground. This city was Jerusalem. It was destroyed because of the unbelief of the Jews. Isaiah prophesied that the Lord will rebuild this city. This city would eventually be rebuilt, but the city that Isaiah refers to is the Church.

In this city the Lord will provide meat and wine. The fattest meats with much marrow, and the choicest wines from the lees. This flesh and wine will strengthen the poor and needy. It will be a refuge from sin. In the city of the Church, the Lord Jesus gives to us His Body and Blood in bread and wine for the remission of sins. In the Church, the Lord provides refuge for all repentant sinners who cling to Him in faith.

This picture of the Church that Isaiah gives is really a foreshadowing of the eternal city of Heaven. Here we contend with sin and death. In Heaven and the life of the world to come there will be no death or sin. We will enjoy an eternal, unending feast of the fattest meats and choicest wines, an eternal banquet. While we remain in this life, however, we get a foretaste of that eternal feast in the Church.

Prayer: O Lord, who never failest to help and govern those whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love, make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

This One who had done no wrong, but was sentenced to death, brought about the miraculous preaching that day; each one heard the speaker's voice in his own native language. The message, then, must be true: this Jesus was exalted on high, even to the position of exercising the authority and might of God. He is the Christ, the Lord!

Who is? The first words echo back, "This Jesus, whom you crucified." Certainly, they were cut to the heart! The weight of their guilt is palpable, and what shall they do to be saved from what they deserve for such a crime? Peter's response, though, was not one of what they must do, but of what they needed to have done to them: they needed to be baptized because of what is revealed in Christ. They needed to be baptized so that they would be clean as only His work could clean them. Baptism would give them a clean and renewed heart and mind through the washing away of sins and the giving of the Holy Spirit.

The leaders of the Jews had said, "Let His blood be on us and on our children." Here Peter tells them that both they and their children could receive this gift of faith in Christ. Each one must be washed for one's own sins, because each made it necessary for the Christ to suffer and die; each must receive the washing that applies the merit of His death and brings life to each believer.

Prayer: O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

The proper expectation of God the Son's coming into the world as true holiness in the flesh would be the extermination of all that was unclean. Like the ultimate superhero with avenging might, the whole 'crime syndicate' known as mankind should be cut down by Him, no longer allowed to defile God's creation! Yet, Jesus says He did not come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. Those who would look to any other way to avoid the eternal punishment due them stand already condemned, awaiting the execution of their sentence. Anyone who trusts in Him who gave up His perfectly righteous life on the altar of the cross, though, has no condemnation (Romans 8:1).

He who is the Light has come into the world to save the world, but the darkness doesn't want light; it doesn't want its deeds seen for what they are. The Holy Spirit comes to convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:5–15). He comes to lead us out of our inborn darkness by giving us the way to escape not merely the penalty for our sins, but to escape sin itself. Through confidence in Jesus' payment for our sin, we are already reborn and have the assurance that on the Last Day even our flesh shall enjoy the perfection in which God now views us in connection with Christ.

Prayer: O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Even us poor sinners know how to give good gifts to those who ask. We do not deceive our children by giving them one thing when they have asked for another. If they ask for bread, we do not give them a stone. If they ask for fish, we do not give them a serpent. We give the ones we love the things for which they ask. We do this even though we are full of sin. Even though original sin inheres in us, we still know how to give good things to those who ask of us.

How much more so is this with the Lord? In Him is no guile whatsoever. He is holy and just. He is faithful. He will give us what we ask for in prayer. Our Lord Jesus tells us how to pray. We are to ask, seek, and knock. These things show diligence and persistence. We are to ask with great concern and consideration. This is what it means to seek. But our Lord adds that we are to knock, that is, that we are to ask and seek from our Lord with great intensity and passion. That which we are to ask, seek, and knock for from our Lord is the pearls that should not be cast before swine. We are to ask diligently for forgiveness, life, and salvation. These things our Lord will gladly and willingly give to all those who ask.

Prayer: O Lord, who never failest to help and govern those whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love, make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Lesson from the Book of Concord

The Second Sunday after Trinity

ARTICLE XIII.

Of the Use of the Sacraments, they [the Lutheran theologians] teach, that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments.

They therefore condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify by the outward act, and do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required.

—The Augsburg Confession

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8: ACTS 8:14–17 EMBER WEDNESDAY OF WITSUN WEEK

As Jesus had foretold, the apostles proclaim Him in Jerusalem and all Judea, then to Samaria and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Peter and John were sent to bring the believers in Samaria the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. By this, the Church there was assured they had full authority to proclaim Jesus as the Christ.

They had already been “baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” That phrase doesn’t mean that only Jesus’ name was used in the Baptism, but that they were baptized in connection with God’s revelation in Him—baptized the way He commanded (Matthew 28:19) and as the means of connecting them with His salvation. The apostles didn’t need to baptize them or proclaim the Holy Spirit to them, but simply laid hands on them to commission them to dispense Christ’s forgiveness.

By the visitation of these most prominent disciples, those who had been despised by the leaders of the Jewish nation would see that in the redemption won by Christ, the Samaritans were no longer outcasts, but were as much His Church as those in Jerusalem. With such assurance given there, the same Word comes to the Gentile world, where the faithful Church is all one in Christ (Acts 15:6–29, Ephesians 2:11–18, Galatians 3:26–29, Romans 11:16–24). We express our unity with Christ’s Church in other lands by remembering our partners in Columbia, Peru, and the Philippines in prayer and offerings this and every Ember Week.

Prayer: O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

The mercy of God astonishes the Jews who had come up with Peter to the house of Cornelius: the Gentiles receive the Holy Ghost with the same miraculous signs as were seen in Jerusalem on Pentecost. By this, the Holy Spirit ratified the message St. Peter had preached, so that all would know that the Gentiles would be full partakers of God's gift of salvation. Those who would receive Jesus as the One in whom they would receive the judgment of acquittal would be in a relationship of filial fear with God. They could consider Him as their dear Father who would accept them when they ran to Him confessing their sins. They would be as dear children who don't want to disappoint, instead of running away like terrified disobedient slaves. Their simplest works, done in connection with faith in Jesus' bringing of peace, would thus be transformed by Him, and considered precious and righteous by Him, as the art of His own beloved children.

Jesus Christ is Lord of all, Peter says. He is Yahweh (Jehovah), the Creator and Judge of heaven and earth, of the living and the dead. In Him the favor of the one true God, which had rested on Israel until He should come in the flesh, is now upon all people, in every nation who would receive Him as the only Savior from sin, death, and hell. "God shows no partiality," but "whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

Prayer: O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Solomon tells us that it is good for a man to eat, drink, and be merry. But in Jesus' parable of the rich fool, we see that riches are not to be the main focus of one's life. And though many believe that Jesus will grant people the material desires of their hearts, Jesus plainly says in this parable that He is not the arbitrator of earthly possessions. Rather, He gives us warning about letting our lives become obsessed with riches and possessions.

From Jesus' teaching we see that there are two kinds of riches and possessions. The first kind of possessions are earthly and temporal. Even in the best earthly, temporal sense, these possessions will only last for us until we die. Christians should not yearn for an abundance of these things. But the second kind of possessions lasts forever. These are the things that Christians desire. God gives us His holy name. And He gives us His holy Word in the holy Scriptures. He gives us His holy name and Word in the waters of holy Baptism, and in, with, and under the bread and wine in His holy Supper. God's name and God's Word are the eternal heavenly things that we treasure. These are the things that last forever.

Prayer: Almighty God, who, through the preaching of Thy servants, the blessed Reformers, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine forth: grant, we beseech Thee, that, knowing its saving power, we may faithfully guard and defend it against all enemies, and joyfully proclaim it, to the salvation of souls and the glory of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

We are all sinners. None is righteous of his own accord. There is only one man who was (and is) righteous—the God-Man, Jesus Christ. But, Jesus said that those who are righteous receive a righteous man’s reward. How can that be, since all are sinners? Here’s how: Believe and be baptized in the name of the Triune God and you will have received a righteous man’s reward. That reward is the name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Even and especially with that name on you, you will continue to receive a righteous man’s reward in this world: there will be no peace for you. Confessing Jesus as your Lord will set you against those who do not believe. Why? Many confess a ‘Jesus’ who was just a man. Many confess a ‘Jesus’ that they can pick and choose what they want to believe about Him. By doing so, they worship false gods; gods that don’t exist. Those unbelievers will persecute you. But for those who are righteous by faith in Christ, their reward is eternal, not temporal. Righteous as you are by faith in the Righteous One, you will live forever with God’s name on you.

Prayer: O Lord God, heavenly Father, who through Thy servant John the Baptist didst bear witness that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, and that all who believe in Him shall inherit eternal life, we humbly pray Thee to enlighten us by Thy Holy Spirit that we may at all times find comfort and joy in this witness, continue steadfast in the true faith, and at last with all believers attain unto eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

The Ascension is no abandonment, leaving a ‘self-serve’ Christianity with each wondering whether his salvation was genuine. Rather, Jesus established the continuation of His own Office as an objective delivery system for God’s truth and blessings.

Holy Scripture, the written Word of God through His prophets, apostles, and evangelists, gives us an everlasting source and norm for all things to be taught in the Church. From it His pastors teach us, feeding us in these verdant pastures and giving us to drink of these pure waters. They do this work of ministry—of service to Christ—so that the Church is truly and rightly edified (built up). Thus, Christ’s holy people are equipped to serve in their various vocations, so that in both words and works all confess the same thing. Our faith is united in this singular knowledge of the Son of God being declared to all, that others might join us in confessing the same. In this, Jesus’ word is fulfilled, that your “light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16; cf. 1 Peter 2:9–10).

Through our bishop, pastors, and deacons—who are committed to the standard of the pure Word of God, purely confessed in the Book of Concord—Christ’s Church is fitted together to completion, so that the members of Christ’s body are not led astray, but fed with His grace so that each member supports and builds up the other.

Prayer: O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

We give thanks each Ember Week for the gifts God gives to meet our bodily needs by sharing our blessings with those in other lands with whom we are in fellowship. God's promise in today's reading is declared in this expression of unity in Christ. When the restoration of Israel is prophesied, we always see the historical events falling short of the promise. There is always something more glorious in view: the collecting of all who are scattered among the nations of the world who will call on the name of the Lord (Acts 10:34–48).

St. Paul thus tells us that all the events and teaching in the Old Testament were recorded for our sake (1 Corinthians 10:11), recorded as examples for us, so that we learn from them how to walk uprightly as those who are saved by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone, just as they were. Even as the Lord says He receives His people as a sweet aroma, He reminds them to remember the things that defiled and exiled them. When they loathe what they have been, they will understand how truly rich His grace is. "Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways." We learn the same each Lent; in the power of the resurrection (ours through Baptism, 1 Peter 3:21) the Holy Spirit teaches us to live as those who believe it.

Prayer: O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Fear is a great motivator. Ever had someone point a gun at you? Then you know that fear is a great motivator. Jesus speaks of fear. He implies that those who hear His message in unbelief will take His Words as a threat. In retaliation, they will be motivated to persecute Christians. But, Jesus encourages His followers to not fear those who might kill them because of their faith and witness in Him. Persecutors can kill the body of believers, but not their soul. We should fear the one who can kill the body and the soul in hell. And that One is not the devil; that One is God. God will punish the devil and his demons, along with all unbelievers in hell. So fear, love, and trust in God, not the devil and his demons, or those who persecute you for your faith.

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things. Fear not what men can do to you. Those who deny Christ before men, Christ will deny before His Father in heaven. But confess Christ before men and Christ will confess you as His before His Father, and you will live with Him, forever.

Prayer: O God, the Strength of all them that put their trust in Thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace that in keeping Thy commandments we may please Thee both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22: JEREMIAH 9:23–24 1ST SUNDAY A. TRINITY

Our Scriptures from Jeremiah speak of the wisdom, might, and riches of mankind. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. As to man's might, all men are made of dust and to dust even the mighty shall return. Let the man who considers himself mighty not glory before God. And as to the rich man who glories before God, his riches are nothing. Whatever He owns will be passed along when he dies.

So, rather than looking to man for life's meaning, look to God. God manifests Himself in steadfast love, judgment, and righteousness. In His steadfast love for the world, God sent His Word, His Son, into the flesh to redeem man. He rained his judgment down, not upon the world or upon mankind, but upon His righteous Son. He punished His Son for our sins. He raised His Son from the dead to prove that Christ's atonement was sufficient to atone for man's sin.

Rather than trust in our own wisdom, might, and riches, let us trust in God and His ways. Do we believe in His Son and claim His righteousness for our justification? This is the way that is right—not to man's wisdom, but right to God's!

Prayer: O God, the Strength of all them that put their trust in Thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace that in keeping Thy commandments we may please Thee both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Lesson from the Book of Concord Trinity Sunday

ARTICLE I.

Our Churches, with common consent, do teach, that the decree of the Council of Nicaea concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to be believed without any doubting; that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet that there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are co-eternal, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And the term "person" they use as the fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.

They condemn all heresies which have sprung up against this article, as the Manichaeans who assumed two principles [gods], one Good, the other Evil; also the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mohammedans, and all such. They condemn also the Samosatenes, old and new, who contending that there is but one Person, sophistically and impiously argue that the Word and the Holy Ghost are not distinct Persons, but that "Word" signifies a spoken word, and "Spirit" [Ghost] signifies motion created in things.

—The Augsburg Confession

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“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!” With these words the Lord teaches that there is one divine essence. Elsewhere in the Scripture, including the Old Testament, the Lord teaches us that there is plurality within the one divine essence. This mystery is clearly revealed by Jesus, the eternal Son of God who became flesh for us and our salvation, who then with the Father sends God the Holy Spirit. The Church confesses this in the Athanasian Creed, “The catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.”

Since God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in essence they are also united in will, majesty, power, and divinity. All who are baptized in the name of the Triune God are united as well, with each other through the unity of faith, but also within themselves. The Lord says, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” As the Lord is one, He makes us one, a unity of heart, soul, and strength, in love for Him. Although we are made up of parts, God unites our being so that we may begin to fear, love, and trust Him above all things, and in that love for God, love our neighbors as ourselves.

Prayer: Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst keep us steadfast in this faith and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

You have heard it many times, “the love of money is the root of all evil.” And it is true. But our Scripture reading from 1 Timothy 6 states that the love of money is not just the root of evil—the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And the real problem with all of these kinds of evil is that they lead people to sin, hardheartedness, unbelief, and separation from God.

One of those evils is that greedy, haughty men never get enough money and riches, while other men struggle for subsistence while working for them. The greedy men are led into the sin of idolizing money and riches. The poor struggling men are easily led into the sins of theft and fraud to survive and feed their families.

But as Christians, we should realize that God will provide sustenance for his children. Therefore, none should trust in the riches of the world in this present age. Rich and poor alike should do good works defined by faith in Christ before God and man. We live our lives in Christ. We put our trust in Jesus, not the riches of this world. He is our hope in this life and in the life to come.

Prayer: O God, the Strength of all them that put their trust in Thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace that in keeping Thy commandments we may please Thee both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

God works in certain ways. Throughout history, God has taken action to restore His wayward people. Even today, God calls us, His children, to repentance and faith so that He can restore us to a good relationship with Him. God calls His people by sending His pastors (shepherds) to confront the flock about their sin, to call them to repentance and faith, and to restore them via His absolution.

“And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though they are a rebellious house. You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious.”

We are created according to God’s will, redeemed by the holy, precious blood of God’s Son, and given faith by God’s Holy Spirit, through Word and Baptism. God sends His pastors to us rebels in order to shepherd us. Repent, confess your sins to God! Hear God’s Words of forgiveness and absolution! And believe that God has redeemed you through the suffering and death of His Son!

Prayer: O God, the Strength of all them that put their trust in Thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace that in keeping Thy commandments we may please Thee both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

“This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. . .” The Lord gives Aaron and his sons this specific blessing by which the Lord would put His name on His people. In this blessing He not only showed the mystery of the three persons in one divine essence, He revealed that He loves His people. He blesses and keeps His people. He causes His face to shine on them. This means that He looks with favor and fondness upon His people.

God turns His face away from the impenitent, no longer looking upon them favorably. The Psalmist prays, “Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger” (Psalm 27:9). Asaph sings the refrain in Psalm 80, “Restore us, O God; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!” When we choose to sin, or refuse to repent of our sins and amend our lives, God hides His face from us so that we might see the severity of our sin and cry out to Him for contrite hearts and salvation. He lifts His countenance upon the contrite and believing soul, showing His fatherly goodness and mercy. Knowing that God lifts His countenance upon us, we say with David, Psalm 42:5, “I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.”

Prayer: Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst keep us steadfast in this faith and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The thrice-holy God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—appears to Isaiah in a vision. Isaiah, realizing he is in God’s presence, confesses his sinfulness. “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” He doesn’t confess specific sins that he knows and feels in his heart at that moment. He confesses his sinful nature which is the root cause of his sin. He sees the Lord who is “holy, holy, holy,” and acknowledges his own pollution. The Triune God is gracious and merciful to sinners who are contrite and lament their sinfulness. One of the Seraphim touches an altar coal to Isaiah’s lips, cleansing them so that he may now speak holy things.

The Lord says in Leviticus 19:2, “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.” We are, by nature, sinful and unclean, so the Triune God cleanses us, not with coals from the temple altar, but with the atonement made by God the Son on the altar of the cross. God the Spirit applies God the Son’s righteousness to us by faith, so that we are holy in God the Father’s sight. Believing we are holy in God’s sight, we strive to live holy lives in all our actions, communications, and thoughts.

Prayer: Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst keep us steadfast in this faith and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

From this has arisen the common opinion that the Mass taketh away the sins of the living and the dead, by the outward act. Then they began to dispute whether one Mass said for many were worth as much as special Masses for individuals, and this brought forth that infinite multitude of Masses. Concerning these opinions our teachers have given warning, that they depart from the Holy Scriptures and diminish the glory of the passion of Christ. For Christ’s passion was an oblation and satisfaction, not for original guilt only, but also for all sins, as it is written to the Hebrews (10:10), “We are sanctified through the offering of Jesus Christ, once for all.” Also, 10:14: “By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Scripture also 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 take away the sins of the living and the dead by the outward act, justification comes of the work of Masses, and not of faith, which Scripture does not allow.

But Christ commands us [Luke 22:19]: “This do in remembrance of Me”; therefore the Mass was instituted that the faith of those who use the Sacrament should remember what benefit it receives through Christ, and cheer and comfort the anxious conscience. For, to remember Christ, is to remember His benefits, and to realize that they are truly offered unto us. Nor is it enough only to remember the history, for this the Jew and the ungodly also can remember. Wherefore the Mass is to be used to this end, that there the Sacrament [Communion] may be administered to them that have need of consolation; as Ambrose says: “Because I always sin, I am always bound to take the medicine.”

Now, forasmuch as the Mass is such a giving of the Sacrament, we hold one communion every holyday, and also other days, when any desire the Sacrament it is given to such as ask for it. And this custom is not new in the Church; for the Fathers before Gregory make no mention of any private Mass, but of the common Mass they speak very much. Chrysostom says that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to the Communion and keeping back others. And it appears from the ancient Canons, that someone celebrated the Mass from whom all the other presbyters and deacons receive the Body of the Lord, for thus the words of the Nicene Canon says: “Let the deacons, according to their order, receive the Holy Communion after the presbyters, from the bishop or from a presbyter.” And Paul [1 Cor. 11:33] commands concerning the Communion: “Tarry for one another,” so that there may be a common participation.

Forasmuch, therefore, as the Mass with us has the example of the Church taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved, especially since the public ceremonies are retained for the most part, like those hitherto in use; only the number of Masses differs, which, because of very great and manifest abuses, doubtless might be profitably reduced. For in olden times, even in churches most frequented, the Mass was not celebrated every day, as the Tripartite History (Book 9, chapt. 33) testifies: “Again in Alexandria, every Wednesday and Friday, the Scriptures are read, and the doctors expound them, and all things are done, except only the celebration of the Eucharist.”

—The Augsburg Confession

Lesson from the Book of Concord

The First Sunday after Trinity

THURSDAY, JUNE 16: JOHN 15:18–26

TRINITY

ARTICLE XXIV.

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. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone, that the unlearned be taught. And not only has Paul commanded to use in the Church a language understood by the people [1 Cor. 14: 2, 9], but it has also be so ordained by man's law.

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 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. It does not, therefore, appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries, than among us.

But it is evident that for a long time, it has been the public and most grievous complaint of all good men, that Masses have been basely profaned and applied to purposes of lucre. For it is unknown how far this abuse obtains in all the churches, by what manner of men Masses are said only for fees or stipends, and how many celebrate them contrary to the Canons. But Paul severely threatens those who deal unworthily with the Eucharist, when he says [1 Cor. 11:27]: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." When, therefore, our priests were admonished concerning this sin, Private Masses were discontinued among us, as scarcely any Private Masses were celebrated except for lucre's sake.

Neither were the bishops ignorant of these abuses, and if they had corrected them in time, there would now be less dissension. Heretofore, by their own negligence, they suffered many corruptions to creep into the Church. Now, when it is too late, they begin to complain of the troubles of the Church, seeing that this disturbance has been occasioned simply by those abuses, which were so manifest that they could be borne no longer. Great dissensions have arisen concerning the Mass, concerning the Sacrament. Perhaps the world is being punished for such long-continued profanations of the Mass, as have been tolerated in the churches for so many centuries, by the very men who were both able and in duty bound to correct them. For, in the Ten Commandments, it is written (Exodus 20), "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." But since the world began, nothing that God ever ordained seems to have been so abused for filthy lucre as the Mass.

There was also added the opinion which infinitely increased Private Masses, namely, that Christ, by His passion, had made satisfaction for original sin, and instituted the Mass wherein an offering should be made for daily sins, venial and mortal.

Christ will send the Helper—God the Holy Spirit—from the Father. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, but He also proceeds from God the Son since God the Father and God the Son are united in essence. The Helper is the co-eternal and co-majestic third person of the Holy Trinity, for He is "The spirit of your Father" (Matthew 10:20) and "the Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9).

When Christ sends the Helper, "He will testify of Me," Jesus says. God the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ through the apostles' preaching, both spoken and written in the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament. His testimony of Christ creates contrition and faith in people's hearts. His testimony also fortifies believers against the world's hatred and vitriol. He testifies to us that we are not of the world. He has transferred us out of the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of God the Son, where there is forgiveness, peace, joy, and the newness of life. There will be persecutions and crosses to bear for those whom Christ has chosen out of the world, but those will be no greater than the persecutions and cross that God the Son bore for us and our salvation. The Helper testifies to Christ's victory and teaches us that His victory over sin, death, and the devil is ours as well.

Prayer: Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst keep us steadfast in this faith and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

God is Father because He begot a Son from eternity, and that Son is of the same substance as the Father. From the Father and the Son proceed God the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not an academic proposition to be intellectually acknowledged. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is who God is, and it is also our salvation. God the Father sends God the Son to assume human flesh, being born of a woman alone. As man, God the Son redeems sinful mankind from the curse and condemnation of the Law which hangs over all mankind because of our disobedience. All who believe in God the Son's death for their sins receive His perfect righteousness and are adopted as sons of God.

“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God the Son. Since He adopts believers as sons of God, He gives them His Holy Spirit as well. By the power of the Holy Spirit we pray to God our Father. We abstain from fleshly lusts which war against our souls. We rise each day to live before God in righteousness and purity, no longer as sons of the devil and slaves to sin, but as sons of God with His Spirit and strength.

Prayer: Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst keep us steadfast in this faith and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Lord opened Lydia's heart to give heed to the things Paul said. Without the Lord opening her heart, Paul's gospel would have gone in one ear and out the other. But God opens the woman's heart and implants His Word, creates faith, and brings forth faith's fruits in lodging Paul and his companions. Lydia reminds us that we cannot, by our own reason or strength, believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, or come to Him, but that God the Holy Ghost calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith. He opens the door of our hearts through the preaching of His Word, the testimony of the Holy Spirit. “This Word man is indeed to hear; however, it is not by his own powers, but only through the grace and working of the Holy Ghost that he can yield faith to it and accept it” (Formula of Concord, Epitome II.19).

Christ says in Revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” He knocks on the door of our hearts through His Word. The Holy Spirit gives us new hearts and wills by which we open the door to Him.

Prayer: Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst keep us steadfast in this faith and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.